

GOP PYRAMID SCHEME • PATRIOT ACT REACTION • THE WORM TURNS

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

September 1, 2003

PSYOPS

*How George Bush,
the media, and
a PR firm sold
Americans on
the war in Iraq*

\$2.95 Canada \$4.50



www.inthesetimes.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

James Weinstein
Founding Editor and Publisher

Editor: Joel Bleifuss

Senior Editors: Craig Aaron, Patricia Aufderheide, David Moberg, Salim Muwakkil

Culture Editor: Joe Knowles

Editor-at-Large: Sheryl Larson

Editorial Assistant: Brian Cook

Contributing Editors: Terry J. Allen, Bill Boisvert, Ana Marie Cox, Susan J. Douglas, Barbara Ehrenreich, Annette Fuentes, Juan Gonzalez, David Graeber, Miles Harvey, Paul Hockenro, George Hodak, Doug Ireland, Naomi Klein, Robert W. McChesney, Dave Mulcahey, John Nichols, James North, Geov Parrish, Kim Phillips-Fein, Jeffrey St. Clair, Jane Slaughter, Fred Weir, G. Pascal Zachary, Slavoj Žižek

Proofreaders: Alan Kimmel, Norman Wishner

Interns: Elizabeth Ehrenberg, Ana Hristova, Matthew Larson, Daniel Morris, Jeremy Ohmes, Elizabeth Ptacek, Jessica White

Art Director: Jim Rinnert

Associate Art Director: Seamus Holman

Illustrator: Terry LaBan

Publisher: Jeff Epton

Associate Publishers: Jessica Clark, Aaron Sarver

Circulation Director: Peter Hoyt

Advertising Director: Emily Udell

Interns: Jason Griffin, Brian O'Grady, A.L. Loy

In These Times Publishing Consortium:

Grant Abert, Theresa Alt, Stuart Anderson, R. Brent Fisher, Collier Hands, Polly Howells and Eric Werthman, Anne Larson, Lisa Lee, Chris Lloyd, Robin Lloyd, Edith Helen Monsees, Abby Rockefeller and Lee Halprin, Perry Rosenstein, Lewis Steel, Studs Terkel, James Weinstein

In These Times (ISSN 0160-5992) is published biweekly by the Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 308 E. Hitt St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 27, No. 20) went to press on August 1 for newsstand sales August 11 to August 25, 2003.

The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright ©2003 by the Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Copies of *In These Times* contract with the *National Writers Union* are available upon request. Contact the union at (212) 254-0279 or <http://www.nwu.org>.

Subscriptions are \$36.95 a year (\$59 for institutions; \$61.95 Canada; \$75.95 overseas). For **subscription questions, address changes and back issues** call (800) 827-0270.

Editorial correspondence and letters should be sent to: 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Phone: (773) 772-0100. Fax: (773) 772-4180. E-mail: itt@inthesetimes.com.

Complete issues and volumes of *In These Times* are available from Bell and Howell, Ann Arbor, MI. *In These Times* is indexed in the Alternative Press Index and the Left Index. Newsstand circulation through the IPA International Sales Cooperative at (415) 643-0161, or info@bigtoppubs.com.

Intelligence Report

One of the most under-reported findings of the joint congressional inquiry into the suicide hijackings of 9/11, published July 24, is that U.S. intelligence had no evidence that Iraq was involved in the attacks or that it supported the al-Qaeda terrorist network that planned and carried them out.

This disclosure contradicts the Bush administration, which cited links between Saddam Hussein's regime and al-Qaeda terrorists as one of the reasons for attacking Iraq. The report bolsters the argument that the Bush administration cynically manipulated intelligence to justify invading Iraq. What's more, it's clear that the White House deliberately delayed the report's release until the pre-emptive invasion was a *fait accompli*.

The inquiry, conducted by a joint House and Senate committee, was impaneled in February 2002 after considerable White House foot dragging. The committee completed its work at the end of last year, but publication of the report was delayed by disputes between Congress and the administration over what should remain classified.

Former Sen. Max Cleland (D-Ga.), a member of the joint committee that produced the report, told UPI, "The reason this report was delayed for so long—deliberately opposed at first, then slow-walked after it was created—is that the administration wanted to get the war in Iraq in and over ... before it came out." Cleland added, "Had this report come out in January like it should have done, we would have known these things before the war in Iraq, which would not have suited the administration."

As it is, the report offers a mild rebuke to both the Bush and Clinton administrations for failing to place proper emphasis on intelligence information pre-9/11 that revealed al-Qaeda's deadly intentions. And the report places much of the blame for 9/11 on the failure of the nation's intelligence agencies: "The important point is that the intelligence community, for a variety of reasons, did not bring together and fully appreciate a range of information that could have greatly enhanced its chances of uncovering and preventing Osama bin Laden's plans to attack the United States on September 11, 2001."

The investigation revealed several examples of intelligence community failures. Yet,

most media interest seems focused on 28 redacted (censored) pages of the report that are said to contain information highly critical of Saudi Arabia.

Media reaction to the release of information belabors the obvious. After all, 15 of the 19 suicide hijackers hailed from Saudi Arabia, which also is the home of the militant brand of Islam (the Wahabi sect) that animates al-Qaeda's fanaticism.

The more significant story than the 28 blank pages is the Bush administration's blank response to the committee's requests for information about the president's level of engagement in pre-9/11 counterterrorism efforts. The report indicated that the congressional panel was stonewalled by the White House when it attempted to determine "to what extent the president received threat-specific warnings during this period."

The report also calls into question statements made by National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice last year about the White House's knowledge of terrorism threats. Rice told the public in May 2002 that a pre-9/11 intelligence briefing for the president contained only general warnings of terrorism threats, not specific plots.

Yet again, the administration suppresses intelligence not in line with its goals.

Rice also said, "I don't think anybody could have predicted that these people would ... try to use an airplane as a missile, a hijacked airplane as a missile."

But the congressional report noted that "from at least 1994, and continuing into the summer of 2001, the intelligence community received information indicating that terrorists were contemplating, among other means of attack, the use of aircraft as weapons."

The report faintly damns the Bush administration for failing to act on information that may have allowed authorities to at least disrupt the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The White House has shown a disturbing readiness to ignore intelligence that's out of sync with its own ideology, and this tendency needs to be corrected. Will Congress leave that job to the electorate?

—Salim Muwakkil

In These Times

Vol. 27, No. 20

September 1, 2003

www.inthesetimes.com

3 News

Bush decides helping Liberia isn't worth the effort, but cheating Americans of overtime pay is. Meanwhile, exploited banana workers prepare for their day in court, and popular opposition to the Patriot Act gathers steam.

6 Appall-o-Meter By Dave Mulcahey

8 The Third Coast By Salim Muwakkil

When warriors dissent.

10 Back Talk By Susan J. Douglas

Margaritas, anyone?

11 Capitol Report By Craig Aaron

\$200 million pyramid scheme.

12 The First Stone By Joel Bleifuss

The Republicans' freedom to lie.

Features

14 How To Sell a War

By Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber
Meet John Rendon and the tools of "perception management."

18 Web of Lies

By Joshua Meyrowitz
Why the press dropped the ball.

21 Hung Out To Dry

By David Moberg
Unions take out the laundry.

23 The Kids Aren't All Right

By Paul L. Street
BOOKS: *The Abandoned Generation*.

25 Local Anesthesia

By Kelly Kleiman
BOOKS: *Streets of Glory* vs. the Kingdom of Heaven.

27 Memory, Down with the Ship

By Brian Cook
BOOKS: Günther Grass' *Crabwalk* through history.

30 War of Words

By Jeremy Ohmes
Chicago's forgotten history of free speech.



Anybody but Bush Again?

In Eric Laursen's article covering the Washington conference of Democratic Party progressives ("Registering the Peaceniks," July 21), he reports that a straw poll showed that 65 percent of attendees supported Howard Dean. Truly amazing, considering that the 1,500 participants included senior citizens, fighters of poverty, the disabled, peace activists, and union leaders. Dean doesn't like welfare, and believes in a balanced federal budget. Some cuts he suggests include raising the retirement age to 70, cutting Medicare, Social Security, and veteran's pensions. Dean scares me.

Donna Hinderliter
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Eric Laursen implies that among the Democratic presidential candidates, only Dick Gephardt and John Kerry "voted to give Bush sweeping war powers." I believe we must remember and articulate that Dennis Kucinich also initially voted to give the president such powers in Afghanistan. This vote is pivotal in assessing Kucinich against the other Democratic candidates. He must be held accountable for his lack of vision.

Peter Seidman
Berkeley, California

It was back in 1972, when Richard Nixon was deemed unbeatable, that the Democrats decided to throw George McGovern to the Republican wolves. The McGovern campaign team was so inept and underfunded, Nixon's landslide was no surprise. But I am hoping for a repeat of history, and that next year the Democratic establishment will decide to throw Kucinich to the same wolves. Progressive America would then have the opportunity of its life. If the left still did not unify and organize around a figure even as progressive as Kucinich, we would deserve what we get.

Don Sloan
New York City

In Defense of Aristide

The persistent though long discredited Jesse Helms-CIA disinformation campaign against Jean-Bertrand Aristide has gone on for so long now—more than 12 years—that sometimes one is at a loss to understand the reality of the current turmoil in Haiti.

But that does not excuse multiplication of old libels against Aristide, whose heroism in bringing democracy to Haiti is beyond question. In "Against Liberal Intervention,"

(August 11), John R. MacArthur speaks of U.S. intervention "in support of the sometimes repressive Bertrand Aristide." MacArthur provides no basis for the claim that Aristide has ever been "repressive."

The closest thing to "evidence" supporting such a claim is a 1991 Aristide speech in Creole, in response to reports of an imminent coup—which, in fact, overthrew him days later—when he said, "Together we are strong. Together, we are the flood." Opponents translated it into French as a threat of tire-necklacing. In Petionville, where the small, wealthy Haitian opposition resides, living under a government they do not control is viewed as repression. To what does MacArthur refer?

William H. Slavick
Portland, Maine

Pardon Our German

In "Isn't That Special" (editorial, June 23), the Seymour Hersh article referred to was published in the May 12 *New Yorker*, not the issue dated May 5. In "Postcard from the G8" (July 7), we misspelled *Polizei*, the German word for police, and incorrectly referred to the inhabitants of Geneva as "Genovese"; they are, of course, simply Genevans. In "The Changing Face of AIDS" (August 11), the name of Chicago HIV activist Lathaniel Marshall was misspelled. In "The Supremes and Gay Rights" (August 11), the phrases "treating like cases alike" and "rendering to each that which is their due" were wrongly attributed to Justice

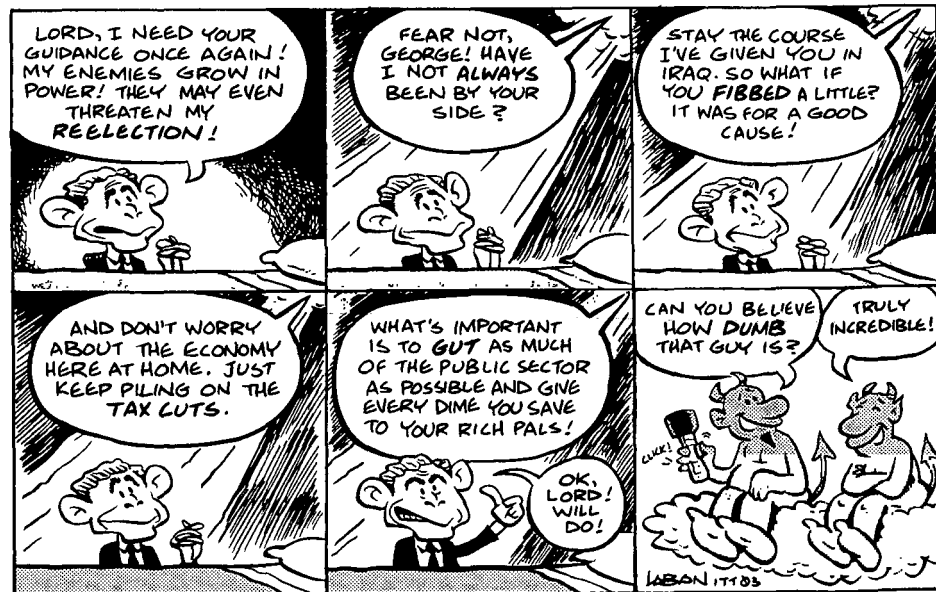
Anthony Kennedy; they are in fact paraphrases of the reasoning behind his opinion. In "Sells Like Teen Spirit" (August 11), Ana Marie Cox reported that Sen. Joseph Lieberman's Media Marketing Accountability Act of 2001 passed both houses of Congress but was not signed by President Bush. In fact, Lieberman withdrew the bill while still in committee when the entertainment industry adopted certain reforms he was seeking.

Finally, in Slavoj Žižek's August 11 essay on the late Charles R. Douglass and his invention of the "laugh track" for use in TV sitcoms ("Will You Laugh for Me, Please?"), a production error led to the publication of an incorrect version of the opening paragraph. The essay's first paragraph should read: "... In the early '50s, he [Douglass] developed the idea to enhance or substitute live audience reaction on television. This idea was realized in the guise of a keyboard machine; by pressing on different keys, it was possible to produce different kinds of laughter. First used for episodes of *The Jack Benny Show* and *I Love Lucy*, today its modernized version is present everywhere."

We regret these errors.

Send letters to:
IN THESE TIMES
2040 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL 60647
Or e-mail: letters@inthesetimes.com
Please keep your letter short, and include your address and daytime phone number.

Terry LaBan



Opting Out of Africa

For Bush, Liberia is not worth the effort

By G. Pascal Zachary

ACCRA, GHANA—Preoccupied with Iraq, can the United States intervene directly in the affairs of a failed African state in order to save lives and build a basis for recovery?

The answer from President George Bush seems to be a resounding “no.” During his recent five-day visit to sub-Saharan Africa, Bush showed a surprising willingness to use American tax dollars to tackle the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is hitting black Africa harder than anywhere else in the world. But while endorsing “regime change” in Iraq and Afghanistan, Bush refuses to do the same in Liberia, a West African country founded by freed American slaves in 1847 that for the past dozen years has been beset by a series of civil wars and incompetent rulers.

Prior to his July visit, Bush demanded that Liberia’s president, Charles Taylor, resign and allow an international force of peacekeepers (presumably to be led by the United States) to occupy and reconstruct the country. When Taylor refused, Bush refused to commit American troops—and in the ensuing weeks, fierce fighting between anti-Taylor forces and the Liberian government have left thousands dead and many more people homeless.

Absent direct intervention by the United States, the carnage in Liberia continues. Negotiations for a settlement between the Liberian government and two rebel groups have bordered on absurd comedy, taking place in a posh hotel in Accra, the capital of neighboring Ghana. Leaders of one rebel group address mediators only in their native Mandingo language. Taylor, who visited Accra recently for what were supposed to be decisive peace talks, arrived in the quiet coastal city to find himself indicted by a U.N. war crimes tribunal. Only with the clandestine assistance of Ghana’s government did Taylor “escape.”

The United Nations, whose Secretary



CHRIS HONDROS / GETTY

Government militia soldiers fire at rebel forces in Monrovia, Liberia.

General Kofi Annan is from West Africa, has sought the assistance of a peacekeeping force led by Nigeria. But the planned force is expected to number only 1,000 soldiers under command of a Nigerian general who only arrived in Liberia with a ten-member evaluation team on July 31. Simply transporting the peacekeeping force to Liberia may consume the entire \$10 million subsidy offered by the United States to the mission. Nigerians for a decade have sought—and failed—to stem civil wars in West Africa (in Liberia and later, infamously, in Sierra Leone). But only the United States can stabilize Liberia by following a script played out by the British in Sierra Leone and the French in Ivory Coast. Both these former African colonialists have ended civil wars in these countries by putting soldiers on the ground and administrators at the helm of key institutions.

A case can be made that a U.S.-led force would stabilize Liberia. The country is small, English is the official language and the local population appears to be clamoring for American troops. When a U.S. military fact-finding team toured the country in July, they were greeted with cheers. In Sierra Leone, a few thousand British soldiers routed the rebels and ended a decade of disorder. Many think U.S. forces would

have the same tonic effect on Liberia, which during the Cold War was a staunch U.S. ally, though today has little economic importance and few links with America.

However, with U.S. soldiers still dying in Iraq, the risks of an African intervention are heightened. Skeptics cite the debacle in Somalia ten years ago, which was immortalized by Hollywood in the film *Black Hawk Down*. Nineteen U.S. soldiers were killed when a peacekeeping operation went awry.

Even if the United States avoided military stumbles, the problem of reconstruction remains, as Iraq is teaching the Bush administration. “In West Africa there is no successful example of putting a failed state back together again,” says Kwesi Anning, a researcher at the African Security Dialogue Forum, a think tank in Accra.

Nevertheless, U.S. inaction—and the deepening violence in Liberia—has upset many Africans in the region who insist that the American moment to save an African country from itself has passed. “Liberians think of the United States as a friend, but Bush has abandoned us,” says Sam Doe, a Liberian and president of the West African Network for Peacebuilding, based in Accra. “The United States can save Liberia at a minimum cost but it won’t.” ■

Proposed overtime rules would squeeze workers

Opponents of the Bush administration's stealth attempt to deny millions of workers overtime pay and a 40-hour work week believe there is still a chance to stop the Labor Department's pro-business rewrite of federal work-time regulations first passed 65 years ago. If implemented, the rules—which had no public hearing and violate both recent legislative history and judicial interpretation of the Fair Labor Standards Act—would make it easier for employers to get more work out of many employees for less money.

On July 10, House Republicans beat back Democratic efforts to block implementation of the new overtime rules by just three votes. Opponents believe that there are

American workers already work more hours each year than workers in any other advanced industrial country. They need a reduction in the work week, higher wage premiums to discourage mandatory overtime, and more mandatory vacation time, none of which the Bush administration supports. Many workers will face financial hardship if the rules go into effect, since they could not only lose their current time-and-a-half overtime pay but also receive no additional compensation from employers who require them to work more than 40 hours a week.

According to a study by the Washington-based Economic Policy Institute (EPI), 8 million workers are likely to lose their right to time-and-a-half premium pay for work over 40 hours, more than 10 times the Labor Department estimate. Others will indirectly feel the effects. Those without jobs will not be hired as employers get more work out of current employees. The rules

would also change workplace culture, subjecting workers to intensified managerial expectations that they put in long days away from family or leisure.

Originally overtime rules were motivated by a desire both to spread the work during the Depression and by a decades-long campaign by workers to reduce work hours. While 80 percent of wage and salary workers are now theoretically entitled to overtime pay, the law provided exemptions for workers who met three tests: sufficiently high pay, compensation as a salary rather than hourly pay, and jobs that involved managerial, administrative, or professional skills.

The new Labor Department rules will guarantee that workers making less than \$425 a week are eligible for time-and-a-half pay, which will benefit another 1.3 million workers, according to an analysis by the EPI. But the rules will take away the right to overtime pay for a roughly equal number of high-paid workers, since nobody will be entitled to overtime who makes more than \$65,000 a year. Since these figures are not indexed, the law will progressively protect fewer workers and exempt larger numbers. According to Washington labor attorney Mark Wilson, the Labor Department regulations instruct employers on how to convert low-salaried workers to a reduced hourly wage so that the workers will have to work more than 40 hours but receive no increase in pay, even though the Supreme Court has explicitly prohibited such evasive tactics.

The new rules permit businesses to reclassify as “professional” workers who lack any advanced education or the right to exercise any independent discretion and judgment in their work. According to the EPI study, 2.5 million salaried workers will lose their right to overtime pay and another 5.5 million hourly workers will be at risk of such a loss. Occupations that would be most immediately affected include such jobs as paralegals, emergency medical technicians, licensed practical nurses, reporters, technical writers, lab technicians, cooks, and factory set-up workers.

The Labor Department claims it is simply modernizing the rules to accommodate a changing workforce. But EPI public policy director Ross Eisenbrey says that the department is actually providing a “a massive subsidy to employers paid for by their employees” both in lost income and lost time for their lives beyond work. ■

by TOM TOMORROW

THE STORY: SADDAM TRIED TO BUY URANIUM FROM NIGER. REFERENCED IN STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS TO HIGHLIGHT IMMINENT THREAT POSED BY IRAQ.

DON'T THOSE IDIOT PEACENIKS UNDERSTAND WHAT'S AT STAKE HERE?

HOW MUCH EVIDENCE DO THEY NEED?

MORE TO THE STORY: THE CIA CONSIDERED THE ASSERTION DUBIOUS AT BEST--AND IT'S EXTREMELY UNLIKELY THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS UNAWARE OF THIS AT THE TIME.

애.

AHEM.

THE STORY: "ONLY 33" PIECES WERE LOOTED FROM THE IRAQI NATIONAL MUSEUM, USED BY BUSH SYCOPHANTS TO DISCREDIT EARLIER REPORTS OF MUCH MORE MASSIVE LOOTING

HA, HA! THE LIBERALS WERE AS
WRONG ABOUT **THAT** AS THEY
ARE ABOUT **EVERYTHING!**

**I THINK THEY SHOULD PUBLICLY
DENOUNCE THEMSELVES--AS
MORONS!**

MORE TO THE STORY: AS OF THIS WRITING, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PIECES HAVE BEEN REPORTED MISSING OR DESTROYED. ADDITIONALLY, THE IRAQI NATIONAL LIBRARY WAS BURNED TO THE GROUND, AND LOOTING APPARENTLY CONTINUES AT ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES THROUGHOUT IRAQ.

06

SET-

THE STORY: U.S. TROOPS LIBERATED A PRISON FULL OF CHILDREN WHO HAD REFUSED TO JOIN THE BAATH PARTY YOUTH GROUP. USED TO UNDERSCORE THE MORAL NECESSITY OF OUR PRE-EMPTIVE INVASION.

ONCE AGAIN, THE PRESIDENT HAS
BEEN **VINDICATED!**

ONLY A DEPRAVED LEFT-IST COULD DISPUTE IT!

MORE TO THE STORY: THE NEW YORK TIMES REPORTS THAT THE "PRISON" WAS ACTUALLY AN ORPHANAGE--AND MANY OF THE ORPHANS WE "LIBERATED" ARE NOW LIVING ON THE STREET, BEGGING AND POSSIBLY PROSTITUTING THEMSELVES TO SURVIVE.

V

V

AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON IT GOES...

AND ON AND ON AND ON IT GOES...

Their Day in Court

Nicaraguan banana workers may finally get justice

By Megan Rowling

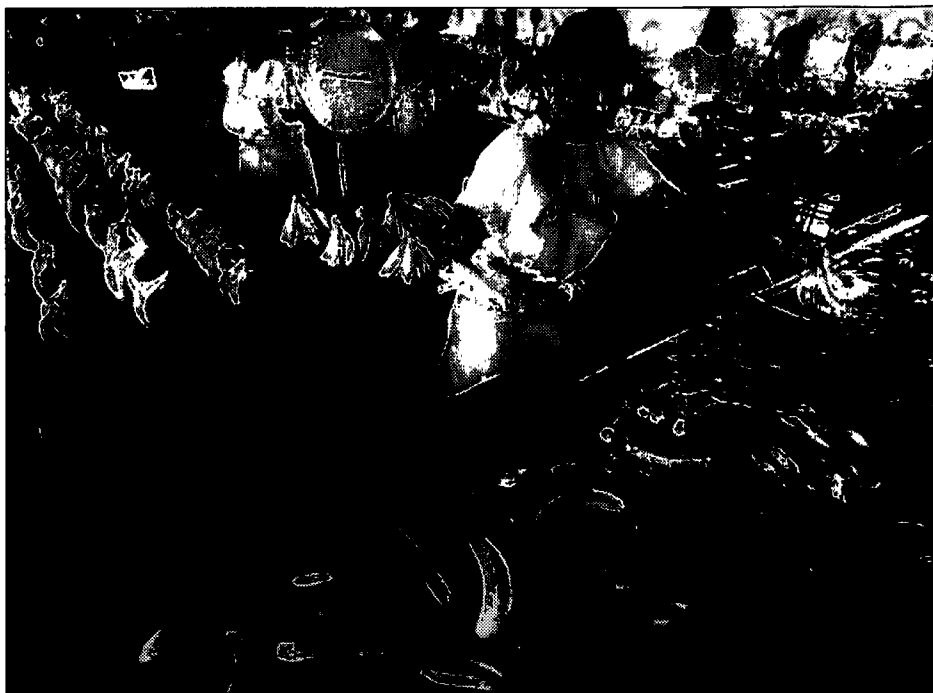
Claudia Blanco used to put in an exhausting workday at the Finca San Carlos banana plantation in Chinandega, Nicaragua. She would get up at 3 a.m. to prepare food for her children, leave for the plantation at 6 a.m., work in the fields all morning, and then pack bananas until 8 p.m.—all for a dollar a day. Meager as it was, she needed the money.

Two years ago, however, she was sacked for defending the workers' right to a collective bargaining agreement. Now, as the women's representative for the Rural Workers' Association, she works to improve labor conditions for her colleagues, especially to win justice for workers poisoned by pesticides.

Health problems are rampant in Chinandega, including sterility, cancers, and birth defects in children. According to *La Jorada*, a third of women tested in Chinandega's Profamilia clinic in mid-2001 were found to have breast or uterine cancer. Blanco herself recently had an operation for breast cancer, which she believes was caused by pesticide exposure. Specifically, Blanco and her colleagues are worried about dibromochloropropane (DBCP), a pesticide agent the United States banned in 1979 but which is still used on Nicaragua's banana plantations. As yet, there is no scientific proof that such cancers are caused by DBCP, but research has shown that the agent causes sterility in men, and it is now widely thought to increase the risk of tumors.

Attorney Walter Gutiérrez has sued several multinationals that allegedly sold or used pesticides containing the chemical in Nicaragua. "The companies' obligation was to let the workers know [DBCP was potentially harmful], so that they could protect themselves," Gutiérrez argues. "This stuff was dumped on them."

Last December, a Nicaraguan judge ordered Dow Chemical, Shell Chemical, and Standard Fruit (an affiliate of Dole Food Co.) to pay \$489 million to 468



JUAN CARLOS ULATE / REUTERS

Nicaraguan banana workers, like this one in a processing plant, may soon be able to get legal protection in American courts from unsafe working conditions.

banana workers allegedly affected by DBCP. So far, however, the companies have refused to recognize the ruling.

The workers have filed suit in Los Angeles to get the judgment enforced in the United States, but Dow and Shell have hit back, requesting that the case be transferred from state to federal court, a tactic that aims to ensure that the lawsuit is heard without a jury. Attorney Christian Hartley recently won a Supreme Court case to stop Dole from getting a similar lawsuit transferred to a federal court. Now he expects the suit to resume in the Hawaii State Court this autumn after a six-year delay.

Dole argued in a May 6 filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission that a Nicaraguan law enacted in 2001 permitting the banana workers to prosecute multinationals is "unconstitutional and violates international due process." And the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative identified the law as an obstacle to investment in this year's report on foreign trade barriers. In the coming months, U.S. officials negotiating the Central America Free Trade Agreement will be aiming to establish rules that prevent similar legislation.

Litigation may be banana workers' best hope to protect themselves from DBCP,

according to Arthur Frank, professor of public health at Drexel University. "More progress is made in the protection of consumers and workers in the law courts than in any other branch of government," he explains. "When companies are attacked in their pocketbooks, they see to making changes."

In the face of growing concern, many multinationals involved in the banana industry say they are now making efforts to conduct their business in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. Yet voluntary codes of conduct have not provided adequate safeguards. Alistair Smith, international co-ordinator for Banana Link, a British organization that campaigns for sustainable production and trade in bananas, says companies could do more: "We can't expect these companies to do away with chemicals completely. But we can expect them to rationalize their use, and look for alternative, less toxic methods of production."

Meanwhile, Gutiérrez says that three Nicaraguan banana workers die a month of DBCP-related diseases, unable to pay for medical treatment. For some, the outcome of the current legal proceedings and any resulting compensation will come too late to make a difference. ■

Strange Bedfellows

What the ACLU and the NRA have in common

By Matt Larson

America's love affair with the homeland security state is getting a little rocky. Republican Rep. C.L. "Butch" Otter of Idaho proposed an amendment to this year's Commerce, Justice, and State funding bill that would order law enforcement agencies to stop using delayed-notification search warrants, one of the dubious measures enshrined in the Patriot Act of 2001. The amendment passed the House on July 22 by a vote of 309-118, with 113 Repub-

licans voting in favor. A similar measure has yet to face a Senate vote, and it's anybody's guess whether the change would survive a presidential veto, but the Otter Amendment signals a clear direction in the nation's mood.

The amendment seems to follow the lead of a growing grassroots movement on both the left and right opposing the Patriot Act and the so-called Patriot Act II. (The latter has not been introduced in Congress yet, but a Justice Department document outlining provisions for a new bill was leaked on February 7, causing much alarm among defenders of civil liberties.)

Backlash against the Patriot legislation has created a fantasyland of political concord: Gun Owners of America nodding in agreement with the American Library Association and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), with the Green Party happily concurring.

Organizations across the political spectrum, from village councils to national advocacy groups, are going on record opposing this newest potential assault on Americans' civil liberties.

According to the 120-page Patriot II document, any suspected terrorist's DNA would be entered into a database, even if that person had not been convicted of a crime. It also evokes memories of the infamous Operation TIPS, a program that aimed to recruit businesses and citizens to provide information on suspected terrorists, as it would relieve informers from liability if they make false claims. "It provides a legal framework for people to spy and rat on neighbors," says Tim Edgar, a legislative counsel with the ACLU.

Patriot II would also make it legal for the government to refuse to identify, even to family members, any detainees it is holding without charges. And Patriot II

Shoo Fly, Shoo [8.7]

You think you've got problems? Try walking a mile in the shoes of Chandan Goswami, a 13-year-old Indian boy suffering from myiasis. This rare ailment afflicts its sufferers with subcutaneous maggots that emerge from the skin and pupate. Myiasis is usually treatable with minor surgery, according to the *Indo-Asian News Service*, but Chandan's case has baffled doctors. Fully formed flies, it seems, are taking wing from the poor lad's penis. Doctors have flushed the boy's urinary tract, but for two weeks the flies have kept coming.

Patriotism in Action [4.1]

Atlanta-bookstore-employee Marc Schultz is a dangerous type: Young, bearded, and somewhat swarthy in appearance, he's also been known to peruse lefty journals in public places. As Schultz writes in the Atlanta weekly *Creative Loafing*, these characteristics are what earned him a visit last month by two FBI agents.

What, they wanted to know, was he doing at a Cowboy Coffee shop the previous Saturday? Schultz was not in trouble, the agents assured him. "Someone in the shop that day saw you reading something and thought it looked suspicious enough to call us about," one agent said. "We'd just like to get to the bottom of this. Now if we can't, then you may have a problem. And you don't want that."

After a tense interrogation and a search of his car, Schultz remembered what he was reading over his coffee. It was an editorial his father passed on to him, something about how Fox News and other corporate media companies have poisoned journalism after 9/11. Its headline was "Weapons of Mass Stupidity."

Once More, with Feeling [2.2]

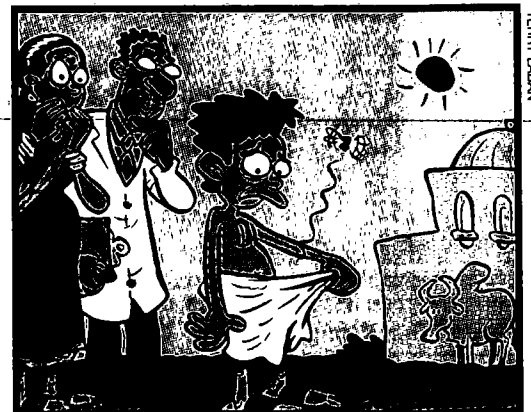
Max Ochs will no longer emcee the summer concert series he has organized for the past eight years in an Annapolis

park. Ochs alienated concertgoers with cutting remarks about President Bush from the stage. Ann Arundel County, the series' sponsor, canned Ochs after receiving numerous complaints. According to the *Baltimore Sun*, one angry letter writer took exception to Ochs' rendition of "This Land Is Your Land," which was "full of vitriol against people who own property."

Sausage Assault [2.5]

The highlight of the seventh-inning stretch at Milwaukee's Miller Park is a foot race of pantomime processed meats. Brewers fans dressed as hot dogs, bratwursts, Polish sausages, and Italian sausages course around the infield warning track, with great

hilarity for all. In July, a first baseman for the Pittsburgh Pirates decided to add an extra *trissotto* to the contest. Randall Simon climbed out of the dugout with a bat and gave the Italian sausage a love tap. The unfortunate contestant, an 18-year-old woman, tumbled to the ground, taking the hot dog with her. According to *Sports Illustrated*, the Italian sausage suffered scrapes in the incident but was not otherwise injured. Simon was taken from the game in handcuffs and booked for disorderly conduct.



would likely contain no sunset clause, unlike the original Patriot Act, which had a five-year sunset clause. If Patriot II is passed, it could be here to stay.

The first Patriot Act was whisked through Congress in the chaos following 9/11, leaving little time for organizations to educate people about the dangers posed by the legislation.

"There was no education before the law was passed," says Rasheed Ahmed, president of the Muslim Civil Rights Center in Chicago, which has helped to organize educational forums throughout the city. "Its' impact is a culture of secret trials, secret evidence, secret deportations, and secret law enforcement. There is no congressional oversight."

Despite slow beginnings, public concern over the original Patriot Act is on the rise, as local and state governments, along with other organizations, have gone on record opposing the act. More recent resolutions have also included Patriot II. According to the ACLU, 143 communities have passed such resolutions in 27 states, representing almost 17

million people. In addition, the legislatures of Alaska, Hawaii, and Vermont have similarly voiced their opposition. In Alaska's Republican-controlled legislature, the resolution garnered only one vote against it.

After 9/11, citizens of Provincetown, Massachusetts, formed the Lower Cape Cod Peace and Justice Circle, with the mission of educating the local community about international and domestic events. In April, the group drew up a resolution against the Patriot Act and took it to a town meeting expecting the worst. "We expected a floor fight, and the thing passed without much discussion," says John Hopkins, one of the group's organizers. "We were in shock." The resolution was one of the first of its kind on Cape Cod, and touched off a flurry of similar proclamations in surrounding towns.

Organizers are hoping that such resolutions will serve as building blocks of public opposition to the Patriot II Act.

"It's a concern shared across the board from right to left," says Damon Moglen of the ACLU. "You've got the NAACP

working with the ACLU working with the NRA."

The ACLU has taken the reins of the grassroots movement with its Safe and Free Campaign to combat the Patriot Act and Patriot II, but other groups like the League of Women Voters and Neighbors for Peace have done their part to spread the word about the Patriot II.

The Idaho Green Party launched the Paul Revere Project and is compiling an e-mail list to inform people about the status of Patriot II legislation, along with other pertinent alerts. Prominent conservatives have spoken out against the acts as well, including former NRA vice president Wayne Anthony Ross and Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska).

Gun Owners of America, based in Springfield, Virginia, posted an editorial opposing Patriot II on its Web site. "When I feel the heat I see the light," says director of communications Erich Pratt. "There's something in here to offend everybody, and I think that's why you see such a wide coalition of diverse groups." ■

War Talk

The new essay collection
from the author of *The God of Small Things*

"The fierceness with which she loves humanity moves my heart."

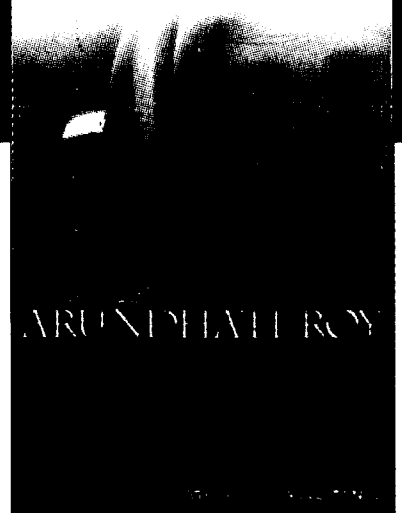
—Alice Walker

ARUNDHATI ROY, the 2002 recipient of the Lannan Foundation Prize for Cultural Freedom, addresses issues of democracy and dissent; racism and empire; and war and peace in this collection of new essays. Fully annotated versions of all Roy's most recent essays—including "Confronting Empire," her January 2003 speech from the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil—are included in *War Talk*.

"So fluent is her prose, so keen her understanding of global politics, and so resonant her objections to nuclear weapons, assaults against the environment, and the endless suffering of the poor that her essays are as uplifting as they are galvanizing."—*Booklist*

Arundhati Roy

WAR TALK



0-89608-724-7 \$12.00

Orders: 800-533-8478

Website: www.southendpress.org

Email: southend@southendpress.org

South End Press

When Warriors Dissent

By Salim Muwakkil

Soldiers of the first U.S. invasion force to enter Iraq have expressed widespread resentment for Bush administration officials.

"If Donald Rumsfeld was here, I'd ask him for his resignation," Spec. Clinton Dietz of the 3rd Infantry's 2nd Brigade told ABC News in a July 15 report. Another sergeant said, "I've got my own 'Most Wanted List,' [and] the aces in my deck are Paul Bremer, Donald Rumsfeld, George Bush, and Paul Wolfowitz." Those are the four men running U.S. policy in Iraq.

This is pretty serious stuff. GIs might gripe among themselves in the barracks, or the mess hall, but rarely are those complaints publicly expressed. Even in the aftermath of the Nuremberg trials, the universal soldier's credo is: Ours is not to reason why, ours is but to do or die.

The abrupt cancellation of homecoming plans probably pushed the men of the 2nd Brigade over the line. After all, they have been in the region since last September, when they were deployed to Kuwait. They were among the first troops in Baghdad during the invasion and have been in the region longer than other troops. But the soldiers also knew that making disparaging comments about civilian leadership of the military could bring a serious reprimand or even court martial. Some apparently were willing to take that risk.

Their courage, or recklessness, brings back memories of the Vietnam era and the soldiers who became involved in the struggle against that war. Members of the U.S. armed forces were some of the earliest soldiers in the antiwar movement; groups of veterans and active duty members were prominent in many antiwar protests. In Vietnam, increasing numbers of fragging incidents (attacks on superior officers) and mutinies revealed the troops' growing disenchantment with official policy. The general public didn't turn solidly against the war until late in the game, and then only grudgingly. Even after the 1971 revelations in the infamous Pentagon Papers, most Americans supported the anti-Communist crusade in Southeast Asia.

Our current situation is a bit different. Many Americans joined in global concert

with millions of others to protest the prospect of this war. Much ado now is being made about the 16-word "mistake" (or lie) Bush uttered during his State of the Union address, but most global observers knew it was a dubious claim when he made it. There was already considerable information available in the global media that had cast doubt on the Niger uranium story.



Those who crafted Bush's speech, and probably the president himself, knew the information was deceptive. But so what? They had been planning an invasion of Iraq at least since 2001 and had gone way too far to quit now. In fact, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, one of the major architects of the Iraq invasion, had been planning to invade the country since at least 1992, when he drafted a policy paper for Dick Cheney, then the defense secretary in the first Bush administration.

That report, excerpts of which were published in the March 8, 1992 edition of the *New York Times*, urged the United States to protect and exploit its unique superpower status, making pre-emptive strikes and taking unilateral action whenever necessary to ensure our pre-eminence. The draft proposal declared, "Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere." The report called for military intervention in Iraq to assure "access to vital raw material, primarily Persian Gulf oil" and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and threats from terrorism.

At the time, Wolfowitz's prescriptions were considered too bellicose. The first Bush administration drastically revised and softened the document. Wolfowitz bided his time and retreated to the woodshed with his neoconservative cohorts, where they honed their arguments and sharpened their strategy. He is part of a group of ideologues that has been busy formulating policy prescriptions since 1976, under the auspices of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA). Founded by neo-conservatives concerned about Israel's security, JINSA has attracted a select roster of board members including, at one time or another, Vice President Dick Cheney, former CIA Director James Woolsey, the infamous Richard "Prince of Darkness" Perle, Undersecretary of State for Arms Control John Bolton, Pentagon official Douglas Feith, and Michael Ledeen, the itinerant and influential "terrorist consultant." Many of these same individuals also are deeply involved with the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), created in

One soldier told ABC, "I've got my own 'Most Wanted List,' [and] the aces in my deck are Bremer, Rumsfeld, Bush, and Wolfowitz."

1997 and headed by William Kristol, editor of *The Weekly Standard*. In 1998, PNAC wrote a public letter to President Bill Clinton urging he attack Iraq. Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz were among the signatories.

The selection of Bush II in 2000 gave the neocons their second shot. Wolfowitz came back to Rumsfeld's Pentagon, this time as a deputy secretary. Several other PNAC members are sprinkled in high places, and it's clear their ideas are driving Bush's international policies. Any serious observer of these developments can see that Americans have been conned, or perhaps neo-conned, into invading Iraq. And in any war, the most serious observers are the soldiers. ■

No news is bad news

64% of Americans think Bush did not mislead the public regarding Iraq's WMD program.

42% of Americans believe that Saddam Hussein was personally responsible for the attacks on the World Trade Center.

"If we care about a functional democracy that promotes economic justice, human rights, civil liberties, and a true civil society, then we must actively build a democratic and culturally diverse media system. Join one of the most exciting and important gatherings of concerned and committed citizens at the National Conference on Media Reform." —Danny Glover

Speakers include:

Senator Russ Feingold
Congressman Bernie Sanders
Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin
Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky
Michael Copps, FCC Commissioner
Jonathan Adelstein, FCC Commissioner
Pat Mitchell, PBS president and CEO
John Sweeney, AFL-CIO president
Barbara Ehrenreich, author
Amy Goodman, Democracy NOW! co-host
Entertainers Don Henley, DJ Spooky,
Billy Bragg, and many more

Attend the NATIONAL CONFERENCE on MEDIA REFORM

November 7-9 • Madison, Wisconsin

Join a groundswell of activists, policymakers and entertainers as we build a movement for better media.

Participate in energizing forums. Add your voice. Register online by visiting www.mediareform.net or call toll-free 866-666-1533.

FREE PRESS

Concerned about media? Join Free Press

Free Press is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is responsive to the public interest in the use of the media. It is currently looking for volunteers to help with its work. For more information, visit www.freepress.org.

Join online or write your name, address and email below or on a separate sheet, clip, and mail.



\$10

Includes a Free Press t-shirt



\$100

Includes a Free Press t-shirt and a Free Press mug



\$500

Includes a Free Press t-shirt, a Free Press mug, and a Free Press poster

Check or money order to: Free Press, 1111 14th St, NW, Suite 100, Washington, DC 20005. For more information, visit www.freepress.org.

www.mediareform.net

This Summer, the Worm Is Turning

By Susan J. Douglas

Ah, this is the life. To be on vacation near the ocean, sunning on the beach by day, and, by night, hearing *Hardball's* Chris Matthews, of all people, repeatedly liken Bush to Ted Baxter, the obtuse anchorman on the old *Mary Tyler Moore Show*. As I eat fried calamari and striped bass, I get to see Matthews, hardly a friend of progressives, hammer Team Bush over their serial lying about weapons of mass destruction and yellowcake. Was Bush such a clueless puppet, sputters Matthews, that he simply read whatever Cheney or Rumsfeld put in front of him and told him to sell to the nation? Why, I must be in Margaritaville.

Since Team Bush came to power, those of us lucky enough to have the time and money to go on vacation have tried to escape from, or forget, however briefly, the totalitarian and imperialistic schemes of our in-house American Taliban. Nonetheless, it was difficult to shake the sense of doom unleashed by the forces of darkness, and some of us spent previous vacations looking longingly at maps of Canada, fantasizing about where to move. A supine media reinforced our sense that we were exiles in our own land.

But this summer, the worm is turning. The inside story of how and why so many in the press have finally begun to ask hard questions remains to be told. But cracks in the edifice are everywhere. And while, understandably, we on the left are prone to seeing the political glass as always half empty—or less—it is summer, things are falling apart for Team Bush, and we need to appreciate that, for now, the glass is starting to look half full.

As the days pass, my vacation gets better all the time. First off, Jamie McIntyre of CNN, clearly weary of denials and evasions, reads the dictionary definition of “guerrilla war” out loud at a Rumsfeld press conference to drive home the point that whatever the administration says, our troops are, in fact, engulfed by a guerrilla war. I can barely believe my eyes when, after a day of sun and surf, I turn on ABC News to see Jeffrey Kofman’s now infamous interviews with

soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division in Fallujah who had been told three times they were going home, only to have their reprieve rescinded. “If Donald Rumsfeld were sitting here ... what would you say to him,” Kofman asks. “I don’t know if I can really say that on camera,” responds one soldier. Another was more forceful, “I’d ask him for his resignation.” I nearly drop the tequila—is ABC really airing this? Even better,



Good Morning America replays the interviews the next morning.

The next night, when ABC News learns that the army might discipline those soldiers who spoke out, the network airs portions of the interviews yet again, and then puts on some of the soldiers’ middle-America, young blonde wives who demand to know why their husbands suddenly have no free speech rights. Then, cut to adorable African-American kids holding up signs asking when their daddies are coming home. Peter Jennings closes the segment by quoting a commanding officer who said, “We are in Iraq to defend democracy, not to practice it.” Jennings gives a slight but telling grimace.

In this same week I can read, on the beach, *The Wall Street Journal's* Al Hunt write about the “Fog of Deceit” and demand an investigation into Team Bush’s “pervasive pattern of exaggeration and distortion.” Next I can turn to *The Boston Globe's* truly brilliant op-ed piece by James Carroll ironically titled “Bush’s War Against Evil” that makes clear how all-out campaigns to allegedly purge the world of evil have always deeply corrupted the crusaders, leading to “the most ignoble deeds.”

He asks whether “ridding of the world of evil,” as Bush promised, justifies torture, the killing of children, the “launching of dubious wars,” and the “militarization of civil society.” Of Bush, Carroll writes, “there is nothing at the core of this man but visceral meanness.” After that, I can flip through a *Time* magazine whose cover shows Bush giving the State of the Union address under a huge headline reading “Untruth & Consequences.”

Even the latest Harry Potter book takes on the consequences of creeping totalitarianism. Harry and Dumbledore, the headmaster of Hogwarts, insist that the Dark Lord Voldemort is back, and is recruiting followers to his evil cause. But the Ministry of Magic, in total denial, refuses to believe this, and sends a “high inquisitor” to the school to silence dissent, suppress certain kinds of knowledge, and identify and punish traitors. The official newspaper, *The Daily Prophet*, tows the Ministry of Magic line until its deceptions can no longer stand scrutiny. Millions of kids, through the book, feel the infuriating injustices of autocracy. And in theaters, the movie *Seabiscuit* sneaks in paeans to FDR and the importance of government social

On ABC, young blonde wives demand to know why their husbands have no free speech rights.

welfare programs in between dramatic horse races.

Yes, the Dark Lord is still president. Ann Coulter’s book is still on the best-seller list. But maybe in the wake of Jayson Blair’s plagiarisms, the Private Lynch fictions, Bush’s inadvertent admission of how highly he regards the lives of Iraqis (and even our own troops) by daring Iraqis to “bring ‘em on,” and the mounting evidence of repeated bald-faced lying, the press and others in the media will rediscover that portion of the body known as a spine. I know one thing—I and millions of others are having a much better summer this year than those hunkered down in the “beloved ranch” in Crawford.

Margaritas, anyone? ■

\$200 Million Pyramid Scheme

By Craig Aaron

The language and logic of Wall Street have so infected the political discourse that most campaign coverage is now indistinguishable from the squawking heads of CNBC.

"Follow the money" long has been the mantra of every wannabe Woodward or Bernstein, and more reporters are on the campaign-finance beat than ever before. The public certainly would benefit from knowing who's backing which candidate—and what favors they might expect in return. But instead of investigating the pernicious influence of money in politics, these stories are riddled with incomprehensible inside baseball about which candidates are moving into the mythical "top tier."

The "money primary"—the year of corporate panhandling prior to the New Hampshire primary—offers the press easily quantifiable statistics and a simple narrative of obvious winners and losers. It allows reporters to avoid messy policy discussions or "biased" evaluations of a candidate's record. Like CEOs being celebrated solely on the basis of their companies' stock prices—no matter how many jobs they've slashed or what accounting acrobatics they've used—the presidential candidates must prove their fundraising prowess. Who's got the best health plan? Who understands foreign policy? Who cares? What really matters is who's got the most "cash on hand."

On Wall Street, it's relatively unimportant whether a company actually makes a useful product—or even a profit. Stock prices go up, and shareholders stay happy, as long as a company exceeds the expectations of the analysts. The same logic is now being applied to the presidential campaign.

Witness the drubbing Dick Gephardt took following the release of second-quarter fundraising numbers by the Federal Election Commission. His "unexpectedly weak performance"—as the *Washington Post* put it—had nothing to do with his health care policy, ability to attract union supporters, or standing among likely voters. But when Gephardt & Co. failed to meet quarterly earnings projections, their stock plummeted.

John Edwards dodged a Gephardt-like

disappointment only by collecting last-minute checks from his wife and campaign staff. And even though he has less money in the bank than Gephardt, Joe Lieberman's late fundraising push left him with "a bigger-than-anticipated sum that will allow him to remain a key player," according to the *Hartford Courant*.

Howard Dean's strong showing shocked the analysts, who quickly branded him the rebel leader of an Internet "revolu-



tion." The pundits split over whether Dr. Dean's Money Machine was the next eBay or Pets.com. John Kerry was generally considered less of a "risk."

The only blue-chip stock in the field belongs to Bush Inc. The president's reelection effort is attracting prudent investors looking to cash in during a second term. The administration has already issued dividends in the form of tax cuts for the richest 1 percent—whose average tax reduction over the next four years will total \$103,899, according to Citizens for Tax Justice.

The president flexed his fundraising muscle in the six weeks before the June 30 close of the second quarter, raking in \$34.4 million—even though he doesn't face a single opponent in the primaries. Bush Inc. lauded the fact that 105,000 individuals donated at least a dollar as evidence of the "broad support" and "overwhelming enthusiasm" for the president. But more than two-thirds of the total money came in \$2,000 checks—the maximum individual contribution allowed under the law. (By comparison, Dean raised more than 50 percent of his \$7.6 million in contributions of less than \$200.)

Bush, who opted out of the public matching funds, plans to raise and spend at least \$200 million before the Septem-

ber 2004 Republican National Convention. (Afterward he will take \$74 million in public funding for a two-month sprint to the general election.) Twenty-three individuals have already qualified as "Rangers" by collecting \$200,000 for the president; another 45 have passed the \$100,000 "Pioneer" threshold. "[It's] sort of like pyramid fundraising," first-time Ranger Eric Tanenblatt told *The Associated Press*. "If you find 10 people and they each raise \$20,000, that's \$200,000 right there." (It's worth noting here that Amway founder Richard M. DeVos was one of the original Pioneers.)

For \$2,000, you might get a lukewarm hot dog. A snapshot with Dubya goes for \$20,000. Closer to the top of the pyramid scheme, the Rangers and Pioneers are eyeing ambassadorships and access to Dick Cheney's undisclosed locations. The energy traders and oil barons who populated the Pioneer list in 2000 can testify to priceless returns on their donations in the form of loosened regulations and no-bid federal contracts.

In the language of Wall Street, Bush is a "screaming buy." Just ask the investment bankers and analysts whose firms comprise 12 of the top 20 groups of Bush donors so

To the press, primaries aren't about issues but about who's got the most "cash on hand."

far. Merrill Lynch led the way with \$264,750 in donations from employees and their family members, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, and CEO Stan O'Neal was deputized a Ranger. O'Neal—whose firm has paid out \$280 million over the past two years to settle state and federal charges of fraud and financial wrongdoing—didn't contribute to any presidential candidate in 2000. But he knows a good investment when he sees one.

With the media's help, the "money primary" allows big corporations and the wealthy to cast their ballots early and often. What's left for the 99 percent of us who don't play the political market by contributing to any federal candidate? We've still got a vote—just not many choices. ■

THE FIRST TON

By Joel Bleifuss

Lost Irony

The Republican National Committee is threatening television stations that dare to air a Democratic National Committee ad reprising the misleading statements President George W. Bush made in his State of the Union address. The Democrat's "Read His Lips" ad says in part, "It's time to tell the truth. Hold President Bush accountable with an independent, bipartisan investigation. Go to www.democrats.org/truth to sign the petition. Because America deserves the truth."

In a letter to station managers in Madison, Wisconsin, where the ad has run, Caroline Hunter, a Republican Party lawyer, wrote:

It has come to our attention that your station will begin airing false and misleading advertisements. ... The Democratic National Committee ... has no right to willfully spread false information in a deliberate attempt to mislead the American people. ... As an FCC licensee you have a responsibility to ... avoid deliberate misrepresentations of the facts. Such obligations must be taken seriously. This letter puts you on notice that the information contained in the above-cited advertisement is false and misleading; therefore, you are obligated to refrain from airing this advertisement.

Freedom To Lie

Where was the Republican Party legal team this past February when a Florida

his
State of the Union address
George W. Bush
told us
of an imminent threat...

A Republican Party lawyer has warned television station managers that it will not tolerate the broadcast of "false and misleading" information, like the Democratic Party advertisement pictured above.

appeals court ruled that the media is not prohibited by FCC "law, rule or regulation" from distorting the news? In so doing, the court threw out a \$425,000 judgment against Fox Television that a jury had awarded Jane Akre, a former Fox reporter.

Akre claimed Fox fired her in 1998 for threatening to report to the FCC that the management at Fox's Tampa station, WTVT, was pressuring her to broadcast a factually inaccurate story about the artificial growth hormone GBH, which is injected into cows to increase milk production. In August 2000, a jury unanimously decided that the report Fox wanted Akre to air was "false, distorted, or slanted."

The appeals court, in overturning the verdict, did not dispute the issues in the case—that Fox pressured Akre to file an erroneous story in order to avoid a threatened lawsuit and to placate influential advertisers. It merely said that Akre had no standing to bring a whistleblower lawsuit because the FCC's "news distortion policy" is not legally binding.

In the wake of the ruling, Fox went on

the air with a broadcast saying it had been "totally vindicated," neglecting to mention that, according to the court, news outlets like Fox are under no legal obligation to tell viewers the truth.

Illicit Sax

In a "Dear Colleague" letter, Rep. Todd Akin (R-Mo.) urged members to support a constitutional amendment that would grant states the right to decide whether to legally recognize gay relationships. Referring to the fact that the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court might soon set a national precedent and legalize gay marriage, Akin argued that a constitutional amendment was needed to prevent "supporters of same-sex unions" from foisting their agenda on the remaining 49 states.

Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) responded to Akin in a strongly worded statement. "I was disappointed to see how vehemently my colleagues oppose same-sex unions," Frank said. "I assume they will be patrolling nightclubs in their districts to prevent any such duet from undermining public moral-

ity. My question is whether they are willing to allow clarinet-saxophone liaisons. The more traditional preference would be the piccolo and the tuba."

News, "I've got my own 'Most Wanted' list. The aces in my deck are Paul Bremer, Donald Rumsfeld, George Bush, and Paul Wolfowitz."

This soldier and others are disgruntled about being misled about the length of time they are to be deployed in Iraq. Others are upset that although their comrades are dying daily, Bush has declared that the war is now over. Consequently the men and women deployed in Iraq no longer receive an extra \$450 a month in combat pay.

Food To Die For

In her new book, *...last meal* (Common Courage Press), artist Jacquelyn C. Black recreates and photographs the final food to pass the lips of 23 people executed by the state of Texas.

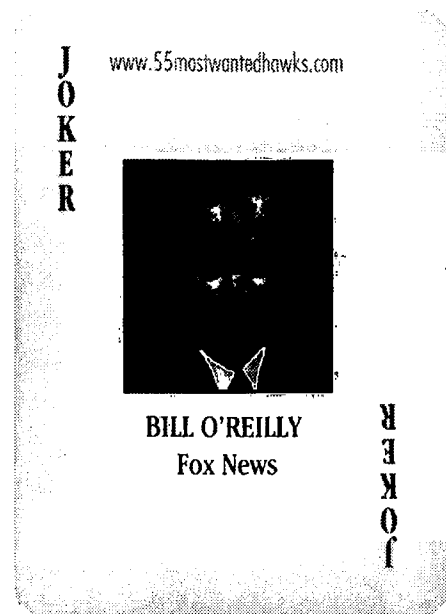
Shown here are fried catfish, fried chicken, french fries, onion rings, green salad, fresh carrots, and a coke—the food James Beathard ate before he was strapped to the gurney.

After Beathard, who is pictured in the book, was convicted on capital murder charges, the prosecutor's key witness recanted his testimony. Subsequently,

three members of the Texas parole board recommended that Beathard be granted clemency. He was executed anyway on December 9, 1999.

In his last statement, Beathard said:

Couple of matters I want to talk about since this is one of the few times people will listen to what I have to say. The United States has gotten to a place now where there is zero respect for human life. My death is just a symptom of a bigger illness. At some point the government has got to wake up and stop doing things to destroy other countries and killing innocent children. The ongoing embargo and sanctions against places like Iran and Iraq, Cuba and other places. They are not doing anything to change the world and they are harming innocent children. ... I would like to address the State of Texas and specially Joe Price, the district attorney who put me here. ... I'm dying tonight based on testimony, that all parties, me, the man who gave the testimony, the prosecutor he used, knew was a lie. ... That is really all I have to say except that I love my family and nobody, nobody has got a better family than me. ■




The Most Not Wanted

The folks at the Heartland Café, a countercultural institution in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood, are just the latest wags to riff on the Bush administration's ingenious "Most Wanted" playing card scheme. "War Party Playing Cards" helps you learn about the 55 men and women "behind the Bush Doctrine of unilateral preemptive war." This rogue's gallery includes the leading lights of "the government, the right-wing think tanks that shape government policy, the industrial military complex, and the right-wing media."

Bill O'Reilly, the host of Fox's *O'Reilly Factor*, is one of the jokers in the deck. The Web site www.55mostwantedhawks.com provides this perspective on O'Reilly: "A contemporary of Bill Clinton, he avoided the draft and blames Clinton for the 9/11 disaster. He advocated destruction of the infrastructures of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya to starve their populations into overthrowing their leaders. After retracting his criticism of antiwar protesters as un-American, he labeled them 'bad Americans' who should keep their mouths shut."

The folks in uniform in Iraq have different ideas about the hand that's been dealt them. A sergeant in the 3rd Infantry Division told Jeffrey Kofman of ABC





The Rendon Group
deploys 'perception
management' in
the war on Iraq

How To Sell a War

By Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber

As U.S. tanks stormed into Baghdad on April 9, television viewers in the United States got their first feel-good moment of the war—a chance to witness the toppling of a giant statue of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Americans channel-flipping over breakfast between Fox, CNN and CBS all saw the same images, broadcast live from Baghdad's Firdos Square. For those who missed it in the morning, the images were continually replayed on cable news throughout the day, and newspapers carried front-page color photos.

A crowd of jubilant Iraqis had climbed onto the statue, thrown a noose around its neck and tried to pull it down. A man with a sledgehammer began pounding at its concrete base. Others took turns, but the statue was too big and the base too massive, so the U.S. marines moved in with an armored vehicle and a chain. Saddam's statue first bent from its pedestal and then snapped completely, to roars of approval from the crowd, which surged forward to stomp on its remains, kicking and spitting on

the rubble. Whooping, they dragged its head through the street.

Media commentators were quick to assign iconic significance to the statue's tumble, ranking it alongside the fall of the Berlin Wall, the protesters facing down tanks at Tiananmen Square, and other great events caught on TV.

NBC's Tom Brokaw compared the event to "all the statues of Lenin [that] came down all across the Soviet Union."

"Iraqis Celebrate in Baghdad," reported the *Washington Post*.

"Jubilant Iraqis Swarm the Streets of Capital," said the headline in the *New York Times*.

"It was liberation day in Baghdad," proclaimed the *Boston Globe*.

"If you don't have goose bumps now," gushed Fox News anchor David Asman, "you will never have them in your life."

The problem is that the images of toppling statues and exulting Iraqis, to which American audiences were repeatedly exposed, obscured a larger reality. A Reuters long-shot photo of Firdos Square showed that it was nearly empty, ringed by U.S. tanks and marines who had moved in to seal off the square before admitting the Iraqis. A BBC photo sequence of the statue's toppling also showed a sparse crowd of approximately

200 people—much smaller than the demonstrations only nine days later, when thousands of Iraqis took to the streets of Baghdad calling for U.S.-led forces to leave the city. *Los Angeles Times* reporter John Daniszewski, who was on the scene to witness the statue's fall, caught an aspect of the day's events that the other reporters missed. Most Iraqis were indeed glad to see Saddam go, he wrote, but he spoke near the scene with Iraqi businessman Jarrir Abdel-Kerim, who warned that Americans should not be deceived by the images they were seeing.

"A lot of people are angry at America," Abdel-Kerim said. "Look how many people they killed. Today I saw some people breaking this monument, but there were people—men and women—who stood there and said in Arabic: 'Screw America, screw Bush.' So all this is not a simple situation."

Perception Management

The visual images, of course, are what most people will remember. But it is worth asking whether the toppling of Saddam was as spontaneous as it was made to appear. If this scene seemed a bit too picture-perfect, perhaps there is a reason. Consider, for example, the remarks that public relations consultant John Rendon—who, during the past decade, has worked extensively on Iraq for the Pentagon and the CIA—made on February 29, 1996, before an audience of cadets at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

"I am not a national security strategist or a military tactician," Rendon said. "I am a politician, and a person who uses communication to meet public policy or corporate policy objectives. In fact, I am an information warrior and a perception manager." He reminded the Air Force cadets that when victorious troops rolled into Kuwait City at the end of the first war in the Persian Gulf, they were greeted by hundreds of Kuwaitis waving small American flags. The scene, flashed around the world on television screens, sent the message that U.S. Marines were being welcomed in Kuwait as liberating heroes.

"Did you ever stop to wonder," Rendon asked, "how the people of Kuwait City, after being held hostage for seven long and painful months, were able to get hand-held American, and for that matter, the flags of other coalition countries?" He paused for effect. "Well, you now know the answer. That was one of my jobs then."

Of course, we have no way of knowing whether Rendon or any other PR specialist helped influence the toppling of Saddam's statue or other specific images that the public saw during the war in Iraq. Public relations firms often do their work behind the scenes, and Rendon—with whom the Pentagon signed a new agreement in February 2002—is usually reticent about his work. But his description of himself as a "perception manager" echoes the language of Pentagon planners, who define "perception management" as "actions to convey and (or) deny selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, and objective reasoning. ... In various ways, perception management combines truth projection, operations security, cover, and deception, and psyops [psychological operations]."

The paradox of the American war in Iraq, however, is that perception management has been much more successful at "influencing the emotions, motives, and objective reasoning" of the American people than it has been at reaching "foreign audiences."

When we see footage of Kuwaitis waving American flags, or of Iraqis cheering while U.S. Marines topple a statue of Saddam, it should be understood that those images target U.S. audiences as much, if not more, than the citizens of Kuwait or Iraq.

It became obvious within days of the toppling of the statue that although the Iraqi people largely welcomed the dictator's downfall, they were not as eager to throw bouquets of flowers at American soldiers as the scene at Firdos Square seemed to suggest. In Nasiriyah, some 20,000 people rallied to oppose the U.S. military presence on April 15, only six days after the statue fell. "Yes to freedom, yes to Islam," they chanted. "No to America, no to Saddam." In other protests, crowds chanted, "No, no, Chalabi" in opposition to Ahmed Chalabi, the U.S.-backed head of the Iraqi National Congress (INC). *Newsweek* interviewed a high-ranking U.S. military officer who said he was stunned when he began talking to Iraqis, even anti-Saddam locals, about Chalabi's credibility. "It's astonishing how little support he has," the officer said. "I'm afraid we're backing the wrong horse."

I am a **politician**, and a person who uses **communication** to meet public policy or **corporate policy** objectives. In fact, I am an **information warrior** and a perception manager.

PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANT JOHN RENDON

The "George Washington of Iraq"

In 1991, a few months after the end of Operation Desert Storm, then-president George H.W. Bush signed a presidential directive ordering a CIA covert operation to unseat Saddam Hussein. And the CIA turned to Rendon.

In 1992, the Rendon Group helped organize the INC, which represented the first major attempt by opponents of Saddam Hussein to join forces. According to a February 1998 ABC News report by Peter Jennings, Rendon came up with the name for INC and channeled \$12 million of covert CIA funding to it between 1992 and 1996. INC brought together Kurds, Sunni and Shiite Arabs (both Islamic fundamentalist and secular), as well as democrats, nationalists, and ex-military officers. In October 1992, Ahmed Chalabi, a Rendon protégé, was appointed to head the group.

Internal differences led to the group's virtual collapse, and for years afterwards, Chalabi was mistrusted by the CIA and the Clinton administration, which dropped INC and began funding a rival opposition group, the Iraqi National Accord (INA). That venture also ended disastrously, when a number of INC and INA members were rounded up and killed by Saddam Hussein's forces.

But despite repeated setbacks, Chalabi remained a frequent visitor to the corridors of power in Washington. Certain circles—the pro-Israel hawks with roots in the Reagan and first Bush administrations who have come to be known as "neoconservatives"—even referred to Chalabi as the "George Washington of Iraq." As a propaganda effort, the conversion of Chalabi to the

equivalent of a founding father was clearly a resounding success. Everyone, including Chalabi, seemed convinced. Chalabi knew how to tell the hawks what they wanted to hear, promising that Saddam's regime was on its last legs, that INC commanded vast sympathetic support and intelligence assets, and that Iraqi forces would defect en masse as soon as the United States showed the gumption to support a war of liberation.

Chalabi's political fortunes improved in 1997, when a number of prominent neoconservatives formed the "Project for the New American Century" (PNAC), which lobbied for increasing U.S. military spending and taking a harder line against Iraq. PNAC's founder and chairman, William Kristol, was a former chief of staff to Vice President Dan Quayle and to Secretary of Education William Bennett (both PNAC founding members themselves). Kristol is better known as the editor of *The Weekly Standard*, an influential political affairs magazine underwritten by right-wing media mogul Rupert Murdoch. Other PNAC founders, including Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle and Elliott Abrams, would later hold important positions in the second Bush administration.

The inauguration of George W. Bush and the post-9/11 war on terrorism would put the PNAC neoconservatives back in the dri-

build special underground facilities for Saddam's chemical, biological and nuclear weapons program. According to a report by the Australian news show *Dateline*, Moran was one of two reporters who were granted access to al Haideri by Chalabi's INC. (The other was the *New York Times*' Judith Miller, whose reporting has come under scrutiny since it was revealed that Chalabi and INC were the primary sources for her numerous stories about Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction. Zaab Sethna, INC spokesman, told *Dateline*, "The information that al Haideri provided went directly to President Bush, it went to Tony Blair." Indeed, Bush quoted the information provided by al Haideri in his State of the Union address as he made his case for war. Yet the underground facilities that al Haideri claimed to have helped build have never been found, perhaps because they never existed.

In December 2002, Robert Dreyfuss reported in *The American Prospect* that the Bush administration actually preferred Chalabi's INC-supplied analyses of Iraq over the intelligence coming from the CIA. "Even as it prepares for war against Iraq, the Pentagon is already engaged on a second front: its war against the Central Intelligence Agency," wrote Dreyfuss. "The Pentagon is bringing relentless pressure to bear on the agency to produce intelligence

reports more supportive of war with Iraq. ... Morale inside the U.S. national-security apparatus is said to be low, with career staffers feeling intimidated and pressured to justify the push for war." Much of the pro-war faction's information came from INC, even though "most Iraq hands with long experience in dealing with that country's tumultuous politics consider

'There is a growing **information infrastructure** that transcends **industry**, the **media**, and the **military**, and includes both government and nongovernment entities. It is characterized by a **merging of civilian and military** information networks and technologies.'

ver's seat of U.S. foreign policy. Nine days after the 9/11 attacks, PNAC sent an open letter to President Bush, calling not only for the destruction of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network, but also to extend the war to Iraq, and to take measures against Iran, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority.

The Information War

John Rendon's refusal to discuss his activities makes it difficult to do more than speculate about the full scope and extent of his firm's involvement in Iraq, but an incident during the war itself provided a rare breach in the wall of secrecy. On March 23, TV cameraman Paul Moran was killed in northern Iraq by a suicide bomber while on assignment for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. His obituary, published in his home town of Adelaide, Australia, noted that Moran's activities "included working for an American public relations company contracted by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency to run propaganda campaigns against the dictatorship. ... Company founder John Rendon flew from the United States to attend Mr. Moran's funeral in Adelaide on Wednesday. A close friend, Rob Buchan, said the presence of Mr. Rendon—an adviser to the U.S. National Security Council—illustrated the regard in which Mr. Moran was held in U.S. political circles, including the Congress."

Moran's work for the Rendon Group apparently included producing the only television interview with Adnan Ihsan Saeed al Haideri, the Iraqi engineer who claimed that he helped

INC's intelligence-gathering abilities to be nearly nil."

"[INC's] intelligence isn't reliable at all," Vincent Cannistraro, a former senior CIA official and counterterrorism expert, told Dreyfuss. "They make no distinction between intelligence and propaganda, using alleged informants and defectors who say what Chalabi wants them to say, [creating] cooked information that goes right into presidential and vice-presidential speeches."

Two days before the Saddam regime crumbled in Baghdad, INC—the organization that the Rendon Group had carefully named and packaged 11 years earlier—was ensconced in Iraq.

Chalabi, whose return marked his first opportunity to set foot in Baghdad since his exile in 1958, set up headquarters in the Hunting Club, a private enclave that was previously the club of Saddam's son Uday. "I am not a candidate for any position in the interim government," he said. "My role is to rebuild Iraq." Simultaneously, however, his office began to take on the trappings of a government-in-waiting, as throngs of petitioners came clamoring for jobs and favors.

As the war faded, Chalabi's name began popping up in more and more places. In May, longtime Chalabi aide Francis Brooke—a former Rendon employee—said that Chalabi might bow to popular pressure and agree to become Iraq's president after all. "George Washington turned it down many times," Brooke said, apparently without irony. "I wouldn't be surprised if the Iraqi people prevail on him." On May 5, U.S. Gen. Jay Garner named Chalabi as one of five Iraqis likely to be appointed as the nucleus of a new interim government.

Psyops

The blurring of boundaries between truth and myth certainly did not begin with the current Bush administration. Disinformation has been a part of war since at least the days of Alexander the Great, who planted large breastplates of armor in the wake of his retreating troops to convince the enemy that his soldiers were giants. The story of Alexander's little trick is usually taught in the first day of class for soldiers who receive training in psyops.

A 1998 U.S. Air Force manual titled *Information Operations*, which includes a section titled "Psychological Operations," states: "There is a growing information infrastructure that transcends industry, the media, and the military, and includes both government and nongovernment entities. It is characterized by a merging of civilian and military information networks and technologies. ... In reality, a news broadcast, a diplomatic communiqué, and a military message ordering the execution of an operation all depend on the [global information infrastructure]." In this environment, psyops "are designed to convey selected information and indicators to foreign leaders and audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately their behavior," while "military deception misleads adversaries, causing them to act in accordance with the originator's objectives." Indeed, it says, quoting Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu, "All warfare is based on deception."

More than anybody else, it was the American public who was deceived by administration's psyops—a covert disinformation campaign that was directed at the American people. In an October 2002 opinion poll by the Pew Research Center for People and the Press, 66 percent of Americans said they believed Saddam Hussein was involved in the 9/11 attacks on the United States, while 79 percent believed that Iraq already possessed, or was close to possessing, nuclear weapons. The principal reason cited by 25 percent of war supporters related to their perceptions of Hussein or the nature of his regime (he's "evil," a "madman," "represses his own people"). However, more than twice that number—60 percent—gave a reason related to their concerns stemming from 9/11 (getting rid of weapons of mass destruction, preventing future terrorism).

In January, Knight-Ridder Newspapers conducted its own, separate opinion poll. "Two-thirds of the respondents said they thought they had a good grasp of the issues surrounding the Iraqi crisis, but closer questioning revealed large gaps in that knowledge," it reported. "For instance, half of those surveyed said one or more of the September 11 terrorist hijackers were Iraqi citizens. In fact, none was." Moreover, "The informed public is considerably less hawkish about war with Iraq than the public as a whole. Those who show themselves to be most knowledgeable about the Iraq situation are significantly less likely to support military action, either to remove Saddam from power or to disarm Iraq."

This gap between reality and public opinion was not an accident. If the public had possessed a more accurate understanding of the facts, more people would probably have seen a "pre-emptive" war with Iraq as unwise and unwarranted. The public's erroneous beliefs developed through a steady drumbeat of allegations and insinuations from the Bush administration, pro-war think tanks, and commentators—statements that were



U.S. Army soldiers from the 4th Psychological Operations Group monitor CNN.

often false or misleading and whose purpose was to create the impression that Iraq posed an imminent peril.

True Lies

At a press briefing two weeks after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had an exchange with a reporter that deserves to be quoted in detail:

Reporter: Will there be any circumstances, as you prosecute this campaign, in which anyone in the Department of Defense will be authorized to lie to the news media in order to increase the chances of success of a military operation or gain some other advantage over your adversaries?

Rumsfeld: Of course, this conjures up Winston Churchill's famous phrase when he said—don't quote me on this, OK. I don't want to be quoted on this, so don't quote me—he said, sometimes the truth is so precious it must be accompanied by a bodyguard of lies, talking about the invasion date and the invasion location, and indeed, they engaged not just in not talking about the date of the Normandy invasion or the location, whether it was to be Normandy Beach or just north off of Belgium, they actually engaged in a plan to confuse the Germans as to where it would happen. And they had a fake army under General Patton, and one thing and another.

That is a piece of history. And I bring it up just for the sake of background.

The answer to your question is no. I cannot imagine a situation. I don't recall that I've ever lied to the press. I don't intend to. And it seems to me that there will not be reason for it. There are dozens of ways to avoid having to put yourself in a position where you're lying. And I don't do it. And [Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Victoria Clarke] won't do it. And [her deputy] Admiral Quigley won't do it.

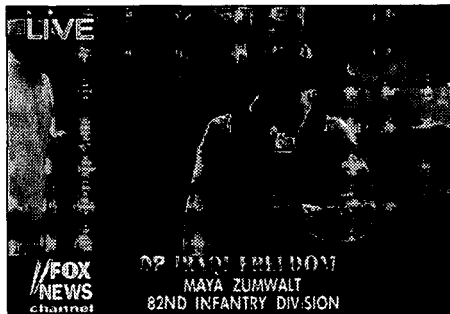
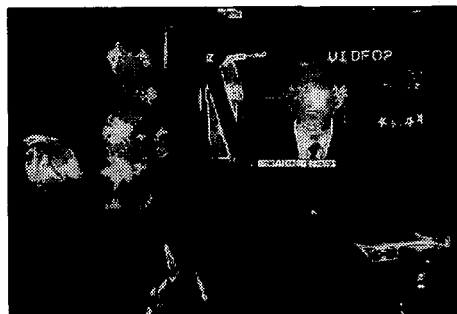
Reporter: That goes for everybody in the Department of Defense?

Rumsfeld: You've got to be kidding.

The members of the press laughed. ■

This essay was adapted from *Weapons of Mass Deception: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush's War on Iraq* (Tarcher/Penguin, 2003).

“So frustrated have the [U.N.] inspectors become that one source has referred to the U.S. intelligence they’ve been getting as ‘garbage after garbage after garbage.’ In fact ... the source used another cruder word.” Mark Phillips, CBSNews.com, February 20, 2003.



WEB OF LIES

By Joshua Meyrowitz

Now that the invasion of Iraq is a *fait accompli*, the mainstream U.S. news media are finally giving significant attention to the weaknesses in the Bush administration's case for the war. Of the many distortions that could be targeted, the media have focused primarily on the “16 words” in the president's January 2003 State of the Union address—the sentence that repeated the now-discredited claim that Iraq attempted to buy uranium from Niger to reconstitute its nuclear weapons program. In looking for whom to blame for deceiving the American people about Iraq's weapons (the CIA, the White House staff, the vice president, the president), the news media have left out one key player in the deceptions: themselves.

News organizations encourage journalists to gather news from the most “authoritative sources.” To the public, the phrase may sound interchangeable with “reliable experts.” Yet in practice it means turning to those in the highest positions of power or their designated spokespeople. In the coverage of the buildup to the war in Iraq, that meant relying primarily on the president and his press secretary, the vice president, the secretaries of state and defense, the national security adviser, and other “official sources,” including congressional leaders.

When Rumsfeld and Powell disagreed over how to proceed with Iraq, the news media covered the debate. *Newsweek*, for example, pictured them side-by-side for a September 16, 2002 cover story on “The War Over War.” Yet when these officials moved into sync with each other, the authority-conscious news media mostly reflected that consensus. Even when millions protested the impending war, relatively little attention was given to the arguments supporting dissent.

There are many reasons why journalists seek out authorities for news, rather than interviewing experts and participants or reviewing documents. One such reason is convenience. Authorities take great care to dispense information to journalists in a form that fits easily into news stories. High public officials also enjoy a presumption of veracity that more ordinary sources do not—which means, as a practical matter, a reporter does not need to verify official statements as rigorously as he or she would those of lesser mortals.

Many other benefits accrue to news organizations whose reporters do not stray too far from official agendas. They can be assured of regular “access” to authorities and to “inside scoops.” They can protect themselves against criticism that they are “biased” or “unpatriotic.” They can avoid offending and thereby losing audiences, whose attention they sell to advertisers (the major source of media revenues). They can advance their own

interests with respect to lobbying for favorable government policies toward media corporations or acquiring government contracts for their non-media businesses. (General Electric, for example—whose roster of companies includes NBC, MSNBC, and CNBC—is a major military contractor). Finally, life is just easier for journalists and their parent corporations when they parrot official views in their reports. They are less likely to be attacked by the powerful.

Naturally, there are also good and responsible reasons to pay attention to authoritative sources. Authorities often have access to volumes of information not easily available elsewhere. Moreover, since authorities have the power to act in the name of the country, monitoring their thoughts and plans is an important part of being a watchdog for the people.

A real danger to a democracy comes, however, when journalists rely primarily or exclusively on official sources. Those in the highest positions of authority are often ignorant about things known by less authoritative but more knowledgeable experts. Additionally, officials often strategically withhold and release information to suit their own agendas, trying to shape the amount and type of attention a story will get. (Check out the Saturday newspaper for stories authorities release on Friday hoping they will be “old news” by Monday.) Most significantly, authorities often lie about what they do know. Historically, U.S. administrations have decided on the military actions they wanted to take, and then invented the stories that the Congress and the public needed to believe to support the actions. This seems to have been the case with the recent invasion of Iraq.

For all their supposed watchdog instincts, journalists virtually never report an official story and then add “but the State Department [or the Pentagon or the president] has always lied about such things in the past.” To do so would be to undermine the news media’s credibility as well, since it would tacitly admit their past complicity.

On some level, the U.S. news media still understand they have a duty to uphold the truth, as was made clear by the *New York Times*’ soul-searching dismissal of reporter Jayson Blair. His mistake, however, was not simply that he published stories with false information in them, but that he cut out the middleman. That is, instead of doing what many of his still-esteemed colleagues routinely do—publishing misinformation passed on to them by named and unnamed authoritative sources—Blair made up the phony information himself.

The official statements reproduced below were given extensive coverage and largely shaped public perceptions about Iraq. As the “corrections” that follow indicate, some reporters made honest efforts to assess the claims of authorities. Indeed, isolated reports discredited every major official claim about Iraq before the war. Rather than simply echoing authorities, these enterprising reporters requested documents, spoke to experts, or compared officials’ claims about WMD locations with what U.N.

inspectors found when they went to the sites. Even the ultra-conservative *Washington Times* published a major challenge to President Bush’s credibility, though the editors buried it on page 16. Yet much more attention was given to the distorted official claims than to the corrections, and no mainstream news organization gave pre-war attention to the overall pattern of deception about Iraq, a pattern that stretches back to prior administrations.



“It is all a web of lies,” Colin Powell told the United Nations on February 5.

President Bush, at a Camp David press conference, September 7, 2002, citing a report that stated Iraq was six months away from developing a nuclear weapon: “I don’t know what more evidence we need.”

Joseph Curl, *Washington Times*, September 27, 2002: “The International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] says that a report cited by President Bush as evidence that Iraq ... was ‘six months away’ from developing a nuclear weapon does not exist. ... ‘There are no indications that there remains in Iraq any physical capability for the production of weapon-usable nuclear material of any practical significance,’ IAEA Director-General Mohammed Elbaradei wrote in a report to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan.”

Bush, *Cincinnati address*, October 7, 2002: “Iraq possesses ballistic missiles with a likely range of hundreds of miles—far enough to strike Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey and other nations—in a region where more than 135,000 American civilians and service members live and work.”

Walter Pincus and Dana Milbank, *Washington Post*, March 18: “Inspectors have found that the Al Samoud-2 missiles can travel less than 200 miles—not far enough to hit the targets Bush named. Iraq has not accounted for 14 medium-range Scud missiles from the 1991 Persian Gulf War, but the administration has not presented any evidence that they still exist.”

Colin Powell, at the U.N. Security Council, February 5: "Saddam Hussein has never accounted for vast amounts of chemical weaponry."

Richard Wolffe and Daniel Klaidman, Newsweek, February 17: "U.N. inspectors said they verified the destruction of almost all Iraqi chemical weapons and ingredients after [1991's] Operation Desert Storm. By now, any leftover supplies would have degraded beyond use. This time out, U.N. inspectors have found no evidence of toxic munitions at the alleged chemical-warfare facilities pinpointed by U.S. and British Intelligence."

Bush, Cincinnati address, October 7, 2002: "Satellite photographs reveal that Iraq has rebuilding facilities at sites that have been part of his nuclear program in the past."

Mark Phillips, CBSNews.com, February 20: "When the U.N. went into the new buildings they found 'nothing.'"

Powell, at the U.N. Security Council, February 5: "We have first-hand descriptions of biological weapons factories on wheels and rails. The trucks and train cars are easily moved and are designed to avoid detection by inspectors."

Life is just **easier** for journalists and their
parent corporations when they **parrot**
official views in their reports. They are less
likely to be **attacked** by the powerful.

Richard Wolffe and Daniel Klaidman, Newsweek, February 17, 2003: "Biowar experts ... say truck-mounted labs would be all but unworkable. The required ventilation systems would make them instantly recognizable from above. ... And U.S. intelligence, after years of looking for them, has never found even one."

Powell, at the U.N. Security Council, February 5: "Saddam Hussein is determined to get his hands on a nuclear bomb ... so determined that he has made repeated attempts to acquire high specification aluminum tubes from 11 different countries."

Mark Phillips, CBSNews.com, February 20: "U.N. sources have told CBS News that American tips have led to one dead end after another. ... Example: Interviews with scientists about the aluminum tubes the U.S. says Iraq has imported for enriching uranium, but which the Iraqis say are for making rockets. Given the size and specification of the tubes, the U.N. calls the 'Iraqi alibi air tight.'"

Bush, at a press conference, November 7, 2002: "[Saddam] is a threat. ... He's a threat because he is dealing with al-Qaeda."

Powell, at the UN Security Council, February 5: "Iraq is harboring [Abu Mousab] Zarqawi and his subordinates. ... We also know that Zarqawi's colleagues have been active in ... Chechnya, Russia."

James Risen and David Johnston, New York Times, February 2, 2003: "At the Federal Bureau of Investigation, some investigators said they were baffled by the Bush administration's insistence on a solid link between Iraq and Osama bin Laden's network. 'We've been looking at this hard for more than a year

and you know what, we just don't think it's there,' a government official said."

Bruce Crumley, Time, March 3, 2003: "'When we heard Powell citing our Chechen network suspects as the terror link directly to Zarqawi, everyone's mouth dropped open,' says a French investigator—who calls Powell's Iraq-al-Qaeda link 'unconvincing at best.'"

Bush, State of the Union Address, January 28: "The British government has learned that Iraq has recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."

David Ensor, CNN.com, March 14: "[The uranium] intelligence documents ... have been dismissed as forgeries by U.N. weapons inspectors."

Walter Pincus and Dana Milbank, Washington Post, March 18: "[T]op CIA officials had significant doubts about the veracity of the evidence, linking Iraq to efforts to purchase uranium for nuclear weapons from Niger, but the information ended up as fact in Bush's State of the Union address."

Powell, at the UN Security Council, February 5: "Saddam Hussein forced out the last inspectors in 1998."

James Foley, State Department spokesman, January 7, 1999: "The United States did not work with anyone at UNSCOM to collect information specifically for the purpose of undermining the Iraqi regime."

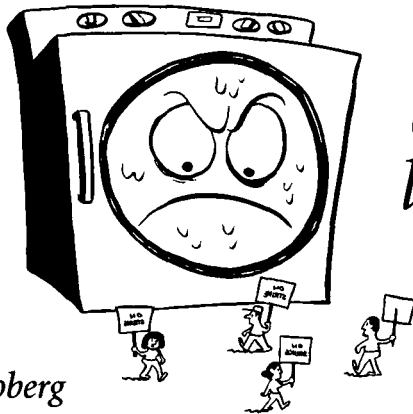
After President Clinton dismissed Hussein's claims that

UNSCOM inspectors had been infiltrated by CIA spies, UNSCOM withdrew all personnel in anticipation of the U.S. and Britain's December 1998 bombing of Iraq for its "defiance." Yet, in early January 1999, after the bombing was over, **Colum Lynch** of the Boston Globe, **Barton Gellman** of the Washington Post, and **Tim Weiner** of the New York Times confirmed that the UNSCOM teams had been infiltrated by U.S. spies. As **Gellman** reported on January 6, "Annan is convinced that Washington used the operation to penetrate the security apparatus protecting Iraqi President Saddam Hussein."

The most widely reported stories about Iraq followed conventions of journalistic objectivity. They were true in a narrow, technical sense: The cited officials really did make those claims. Yet, the country went to war based on a web of lies. The most accurate reports were those that employed what scientists view as objectivity: testing claims and accepting only those that survive scrutiny. A fully functioning democracy requires news media that practice the latter form of objective reporting and give the resulting stories the prominence they deserve before major policy decisions are implemented. In the meantime, the public would be wise to pay closer attention to the stories behind the blaring headlines in order to benefit from the reporting of those journalists in the mainstream who are trying to alert the public to the truth ■

Joshua Meyrowitz is a professor of media studies in the Department of Communication at the University of New Hampshire in Durham. He can be reached at joshua.meyrowitz@unh.edu.

Hung Out To Dry



Unions fight back against antilabor laundry giant Cintas

By David Moberg

Hundreds of union activists, a few dressed as coffee cups emblazoned with "hypocrisy" and "cup of sweat," marched in front of a Starbucks coffee shop on Chicago's fashionable North Michigan Avenue last May. They were protesting the decision by the image-conscious coffee shop chain, whose corporate code of conduct calls for respecting employees, to sign a contract for floor mats and other supplies with Cintas, the fast-growing, highly profitable, and historically anti-union company that dominates the industrial laundry and uniform business.

Last January, UNITE, the union born in the apparel and textile industry, launched a campaign to organize 17,000 workers at Cintas's 340 facilities across the country. When a union organizer called on Santa Ana Ventura, who hangs shirts on hangers at a suburban Cintas laundry, she and her husband decided it was a "good thing" to join the union. Ventura, a 49-year old immigrant from a poor, rural Mexican family, had worked at Cintas since 1997, and she had often spoken out against what she saw as management's lack of respect for workers. "I've seen the injustices at Cintas," she told the crowd at Starbucks. "They fire workers unjustly. We want better pay, better benefits, and dignity. I am here today because I have no health insurance, and I want insurance."

The next day, instead of being given her usual three new boxes of hangers for her work, Ventura was given a larger-than-usual pile of old hangers that would have been much more difficult to use. When she questioned her supervisor, the plant manager sent her home. UNITE organizers filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)—one of at least 117 charges submitted since January—and later brought U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez to protest at the plant. Ventura was permitted to return to work after three days without pay (unlike seven other workers around the country, whom UNITE charges Cintas has fired for their union activity). But Cintas managers subsequently organized anti-union meetings at work, threatened workers with layoffs, punished leaders like Ventura, and created an atmosphere of intimidation toward union supporters. "Many [employees] are very scared because they're terrorized," Ventura says. But she perseveres, she adds with a hearty laugh, "because I want the union to win."

Cintas founder and chairman Richard T. Farmer just as certainly wants the union to lose. After 33 years of continuous growth (the company made a profit of \$249.3 million on sales of \$2.69 billion in the fiscal year that ended in May), Cintas has taken over smaller companies that supply and launder uniforms, towels, mats, and related workplace supplies for giant companies like UPS, state and local government employees, and thousands of mom-and-pop businesses. As it has expanded, Cintas has selectively closed facilities already represented by unions. With the assistance of anti-union consultants, the company has mounted 49 successful—but often unlawful—campaigns to decertify unions (mainly Teamster locals representing drivers who are also salesmen), eliminating all but 700 unionists from the company. Farmer, the second largest individual contributor to the national Republican Party for each of the last two election cycles, has given the GOP almost \$2.8 million since 1988—largely to counteract union influence in the Democratic Party, he told the Columbus Dispatch.

In a cutthroat industry that exploits new immigrant workers, Cintas has not always been the worst employer. But because of its size and aggressiveness, it has been a major obstacle to efforts to improve working conditions across the industry. Cintas has "every ailment you could look for in a company," says UNITE President Bruce Raynor. "[It is] viciously anti-union, treats workers like dogs, discriminates on the basis of race and sex, beats up small businesses who are customers, violates overtime and wage and human rights laws, trashes health and safety on the job. It is such a compelling case. Cintas will recognize the union or destroy itself as a company."

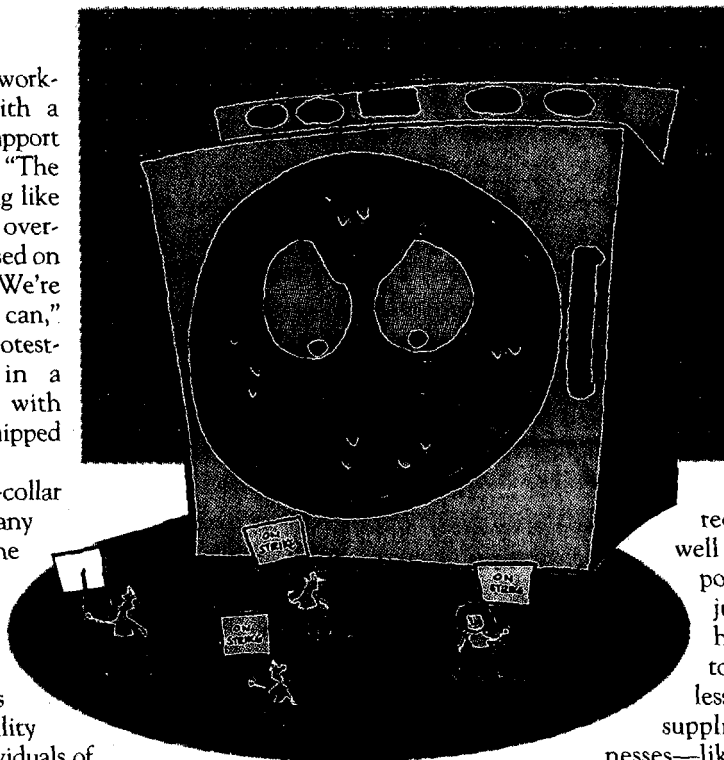
Since 1998 UNITE has quadrupled the number of unionized industrial laundry workers to 40,000. UNITE now represents about one-fourth of hourly employees in the industry. The union has boosted wages, won company-paid health insurance, expanded other benefits, and given workers a voice in the laundry industry through an aggressive organizing strategy. It has combined community pressure—mobilizing clergy, politicians, community groups, and customers—with vigorous employee organizing to demand "card check" recognition of the union. In other words, rather than go through the NLRB election procedures—which give employers greater opportunities to intimidate workers in anti-union campaigns and then to fight further over negotiating a contract if the union wins—UNITE typically fights to win promises of employer neutrality and, preferably, acknowledgement of the union on the basis of large majorities of employ-

ees signing union cards. Often workers strike, in conjunction with a comprehensive community support campaign, to win recognition. "The way you get a union is by acting like a union," argues Liz Gres, who oversees the 30 organizers now focused on seven major Cintas markets. "We're pushing people to do what they can," from distributing leaflets and protesting at work to bringing in a microwave oven plastered with UNITE stickers to a poorly equipped Cintas lunchroom.

Cintas employs 17,000 blue-collar workers, so organizing the company would have a major impact on the standards of the entire industry. Raynor says he hopes to organize the company nationally, not shop by shop. Cintas spokespeople insist that the union's demand for employer neutrality and a card check will "rob individuals of their rights to free elections," but the company has not taken up Raynor's proposal to discuss "a fair process" for decision-making, even though 90 members of Congress wrote to Farmer urging the company to be neutral and recognize the union through a card check. UNITE has proved to be a formidable foe in organizing showdowns. Last year the union won a neutrality agreement from Brylane executives in its campaign to organize the company's apparel distribution center. That followed a year-long, global pressure campaign in which union organizers sent Brylane customers lookalike Christmas catalogs featuring injured Brylane workers and sweatshop workers from around the world posing in Brylane products and telling their stories.

UNITE began organizing all Cintas workers in January and filed a \$100 million lawsuit. It had already won a similar \$10 million lawsuit in California on behalf of drivers who were improperly denied overtime pay. In late June the union and the Teamsters announced a joint effort to organize Cintas, with the Teamsters focusing on the drivers. Unlike the mostly female and new immigrant shop workers, who typically make \$6.50 to \$9.50 an hour, the mainly male drivers typically make at least \$30,000 a year. But the two groups have compelling common interests. Mike Camiso, a 27-year old former Cintas driver now organizing for the Teamsters, says Cintas "treats you like robots and works you to death." Teamster national organizing director Jeff Farmer says, "Yes, the make-up of the workforce is different, but the common denominator is a company that chews up workers and spits them out."

Martha Cuervo and Emperatriz Reyna, both veterans at a small uniform sewing plant in Chicago that Cintas took over, have felt the gnawing management style of their new bosses. When their small employer was bought out about five years ago, Cuervo says, Cintas reduced the quality of health insurance coverage, shifted insurance costs to workers, reduced piecework bonuses (both now make around \$6 an hour), cut and more inconveniently scheduled vacations, and holidays, eliminated the defined-benefit pension plan, and stopped providing free



coffee. With the union and the employees working as a team, Reyna says, Cintas will have to take their demands, including a just wage, more seriously. "They've never listened to us before," she says.

Now with Teamster cooperation, UNITE is hitting the company from many directions. The union cannot legally organize a formal boycott of Cintas by its customers, but it does inform them about the company's

record and urges businesses—as well as public employers responsive to political pressure—to exercise their judgment. At least seven unions have agreed to use their influence to shift employers to unionized or less controversial, more law-abiding suppliers. Already a few big businesses—like Hart, Schaffner and Marx,

Levi's of Canada, and the auto parts maker Lear Corp.—have used their discretion to sever ties to Cintas. The company recently dropped a bid to renew its contract with the city of Hayward, California, after UNITE helped launch a lawsuit charging that Cintas violated the city's living-wage law.

UNITE and the Teamsters are also stepping up pressure on Cintas by highlighting its public policy abuses, including the company's environmental and workplace safety violations and its failure to provide jobs promised in exchange for public financial and tax assistance. "We see widespread environmental violations everywhere," says UNITE health and safety director Eric Frumin. "They don't care what they pump into sewer systems. They have widespread OSHA violations as well. This is not a well-managed company when it comes to worker safety and the environment. They're reckless." Despite rising injury rates in the industry, including frequent problems with repetitive trauma injuries, Cintas lobbied to overturn the workplace ergonomic standards established at the close of the Clinton administration. To keep the pressure on the company, UNITE has organized protests when Cintas executives address business groups or corporate recruiters come to college campuses. It has also mobilized support for workers striking for recognition of an independent union at a Mexican plant that produces for Cintas.

The AFL-CIO and other unions have made major commitments to support the Cintas campaign, one of the larger quasi-industrial organizing efforts now underway and an unusual example of a cooperative drive involving two unions. It is an important test for UNITE, which underscored its commitment to organizing at its recent convention by raising dues and pledging within two years to spend 60 percent of its budget on organizing. UNITE has a history of fighting as long as it takes to win, as evidenced by the 25 years it took to organize Pillowtex in North Carolina. "I don't know how long it will take to bring Cintas down," Raynor says, "but mark my words: We will." ■

The Kids Aren't All Right

By Paul L. Street

Last April, the Children's Defense Fund reported that more than 1 million African-American children live in "deep poverty," in households with incomes less than half the U.S. government's already inadequate poverty

heart of moral awareness, to seeing in one's neighbor another self." "Treat no one," Bennett instructs, "with callous disregard."

Too bad Bennett and his Republican ilk don't see the need to cycle a few more million (or better yet, billion) dollars worth of enrichment through the bodies and minds of America's growing number of "deeply" poor black children, who are now proclaimed even more irrelevant than usual in the face of America's virtuous effort to "liberate" Iraq, to the great "collateral" advantage of Halliburton, Bechtel, and other needy subjects lining up for their share of the general welfare. Talk about your "callous disregard."

How darkly appropriate, then, to read the title of a recent article criticizing Bennett and Bush's educational ideas and policies, which work to undercut the nation's core commitment to public

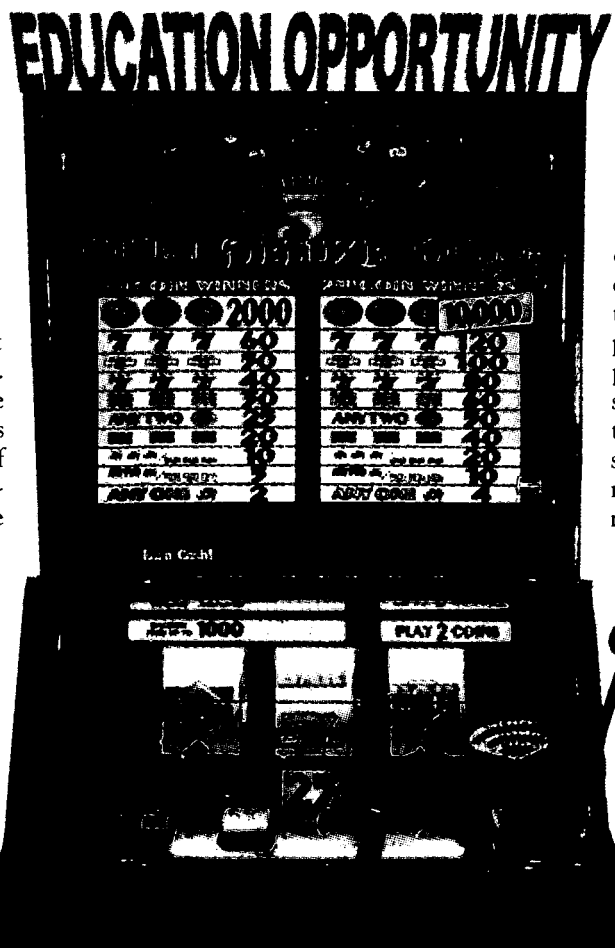
schooling: "Gambling with the Children." How fitting to learn from sociologist David Nibert that legalized gambling is a "fiscal shell game" whereby state governments pretend to boost school spending while cutting or merely maintaining already inadequate funding streams for the nation's disproportionately black and Hispanic public schools.

How sad, too, to see the mainstream discussion of Bennett's nasty little habit discussed in isolation from social facts and stuck at the Charles Dickens level, arguing in bourgeois-moralist terms about the propriety of a rich man's behavior. Mainstream commentators had nothing to say about the deeper immorality involved in the creation and maintenance of a social structure whereby one such man can afford to entertain himself by dropping in machines a sum greater than the lifetime earnings of most of his fellow citizens.

level. This is up dramatically from early 2000, when "only" 686,000 black children were that poor—an accomplishment certain to be deleted from George W. Bush's re-election résumé. The story of this report received a short burst of attention, meriting mention in the *New York Times* and other mainstream venues before it quickly faded.

The coverage given to this story was soon eclipsed by the revelation that leading right-wing moral-crusader, Republican political strategist, and educational magnate William J. Bennett was a serious problem gambler. According to various reports, Bennett, a onetime secretary of education, and past chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, was a casino owners' dream who lost more than \$8 million playing Las Vegas slot machines during the last decade alone. Americans were shocked and in some cases delighted to learn that the nation's leading preacher of virtue was incapable of reining in his compulsion to "cycle" massive amounts of surplus wealth through the slot- and video-game machinery of Las Vegas and Atlantic City.

The first chapter of Bennett's bestseller *The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Moral Stories*, a compilation of morally instructive tales written specifically for children, is titled "Self-Discipline." "There is much unhappiness and personal distress in the world," Bennett writes in that chapter's introduction, "because of failures to control and temper appetites, passions, and impulses." The second chapter is titled "Compassion." Compassion "comes close to the very



None of this irony, we can be sure, was surprising to Henry Giroux. For more than two decades, Giroux has combined left social, cultural, and educational theory to defend American children, public education, and democracy against the depredations of American racism and corporate capitalism. The result is a prolific body of morally engaged scholarship, spread over more than 25 books citing an impressive range of empirical and theoretical sources. Beneath this remarkable outpouring lies a simple concern with the predicament of youth. The truest measure of America's performance as a democratic society, Giroux argues, "is the condition of its children."

By this standard, America is a dismal failure, with too many American children living poorly, without decent housing and health care, attending decrepit, under-funded schools, and subjected to a

hopelessness-inducing onslaught of reactionary pedagogy within and beyond school walls. Giroux's latest book, *The Abandoned Generation: Democracy Beyond the Culture of Fear*, provides a horrifying catalogue of forces assaulting youth, poor and minority youth in particular, in the post-9/11 era.

Those forces include the ascendancy of a "belligerent nationalism" that constructs community on the basis of fear and mindless conformity rather than democratic possibility. This dominant right-wing patriotism cultivates a climate of permanent public emergency to "remove the application of government power from the fields of ethical and political responsibility." It "confuses dissent with treason," democracy with capitalism, freedom with consumerism, culture with commercialism, and justice with brute force. It is incapable of imagining meaningful collective human experience outside the realms of private and commodified experience, proclaiming that "social problems can only be addressed through private solutions." It "collapses the [very] idea of the social under the weight of a market philosophy that ... views community as an obstacle to market-based values, that stresses excessive individualism, privatization, commercialization and the bottom line."

Increasingly stripped of its social-democratic "helping functions" and reduced to its expanding "policing" role, the American public sector is being transformed into a repressive "garrison state." It acts as little more than the authoritarian agent of capital's dictates, replacing compassion with repression and criminalizing social problems that result from the deepening of socioeconomic and related racial inequalities. It generates racially disparate mass incarceration and a savage assault on domestic civil liberties and a preference for military intervention over humanitarian assistance abroad.

This is bad for most Americans. It is especially bad for the nation's youth, particularly poor and minority kids, increasingly turned into raw material for the burgeoning, expensive, and taxpayer-financed prison- and military-industrial complexes. These hypervulnerable segments of the population are targeted by capitalism's wider attack on institutions and organizations that have traditionally

provided support for children's rights: public and private welfare agencies, labor unions, churches, public education, and the family. They are directly assaulted by the Bush educational agenda, a powerful attack on the core democratic essence of public schooling. With its lockstep emphasis on standardized testing, "drill-

Bush's education policies turn poor and minority kids into raw materials for big business, the military, and the prison system.

and-skill" teaching, and what it calls "parental choice"—the right of relatively privileged parents to escape failed public schools to private schools with vouchers that steal funds from already underfinanced schools—the Bush plan promotes a "culture of failure" among minority kids. Many of these lack the "cultural and academic resources" to negotiate "the high-stakes sorting mechanisms of a state- and corporate-regulated testing machine."

At the same time, the Bush agenda pre-empted teachers' capacity to cultivate critical thinking, enlisting them as agents of the corporate state rather than civic democracy. It deepens existing racial and related socioeconomic inequalities since "standardized tests have always favored the rich and powerful" and would be immediately suspended the minute they began to work to the advantage of the marginal and nonaffluent. Those who don't accommodate this reactionary, narrow-minded pedagogical regime are passed on to the criminal justice system in the authoritarian, all-or-nothing name of "zero tolerance."

American youth's predicament is worsening also in what Giroux calls "Higher Education, Inc.," itself increasingly absorbed into the corporate, neoliberal agenda. The means of academia's corporatization include the ascendancy of bottom-line (profit-loss) measurements of academic "efficiency," endemic use of superexploited adjunct and temporary faculty labor ("creating a permanent

underclass of professional part-time workers in higher education"), the spread of digital "distance education," and a growing assault on faculties' intellectual property rights. It doesn't help, Giroux adds, that "many left and liberal academics have retreated into an arcane discourse that offers them mostly the safe ground of the professional recluse" and does little to inspire their students and nurture critically engaged and democratic citizenship.

There are grave pedagogical problems, last but not least, in the corporate-crafted "popular" culture, where young Americans actually receive the lion's share of their educational disempowerment. To illustrate this point, Giroux shows how two recent American movies hailed for authentically representing the experience of alienated American teenagers (*Ghost World* and *Baby Boy*) "seal off issues of identity, power, and cultural difference" from any discernible relationship to problems of social structure and public politics. Both films sever the deep connection between individual pain and "public discontents," epitomizing neoliberal capitalism's radically privatized understanding of social experience.

What is to be done? Giroux aims his recommendations mainly at educators, journalists, and other "cultural workers." Intellectuals, Giroux contends, "represent the conscience of society." Their role is vital because they "shape the conditions under which future generations learn about themselves and their relations to the outside world" and "engage questions that are by their very nature moral and political rather than simply cost-effective and technical." Giroux's main counsel is that educators, scholars, and policymakers work to "revitalize a language of resistance and possibility." This language "embraces a militant utopianism." It refuses to "stand still in the face of human suffering," and recognizes children as society's most important resource. Giroux concludes by quoting Derrida: "We must do and think the impossible. If only the possible happened, nothing more would happen."

The right will dismiss Giroux's analysis and the terms in which they are framed as hysterical or indecipherable hyperbole. Among readers on the left, *The Abandoned Generation* will elicit admiration but also some grumbling about romantic and

"utopian" recommendations. Fine sentiments, some will say, but do intellectuals really "shape the circumstances under which future generations" link private experience to social and political history? Why are so many intellectuals, particularly the academics on whom Giroux seems to count, so indifferent to child-friendly social justice at the end of the day? Passion and theory aside, how pre-

cisely are we to build the sorts of organizations and institutions that might create such justice and democracy? To truly revitalize hope we need to outline a coherent, viable political and institutional vision of how to advance and realize radically democratic educational values.

But then, Giroux is hardly the first brilliant, prolific left writer to privilege criticism over prescription. We are indebted

to him for penning a rigorous, readable, wide-ranging, and sophisticated description and contextualization of the latest phase in America's disturbing campaign against its own children. ■

Paul L. Street is the author of *The Vicious Circle: Race, Prison, Jobs, and Community in Chicago, Illinois, and the Nation*, available online at www.cul-chicago.org.



Are "storefront churches" a symptom or salvation of neighborhood decline?

divide, conquer, and make sure "them that has gets," no wonder urban powers-that-be are so partial to it. Competition among communities for scarce resources can spark creation of powerful grassroots movements, Saul Alinsky-style, but it's important to recognize that the system makes the neediest locations the ones least likely to succeed in snagging the federal, state, local, and philanthropic dollars designed to help people just like them.

McRoberts, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Chicago, shows how this dilemma underlies the familiar urban phenomenon he describes: that of the poor black neighborhood bursting with churches. While addressing the implications of such religious clusters for a pet social policy of the Republican party, so-called Charitable Choice, he is compelled to return again and again to the pernicious consequences of a concept so innocuous we associate it with Mr. Rogers.

Charitable Choice, also called the faith-based initiative, is a doctrine postulating that atheists controlling the federal government now prevent churches from providing social services that would not merely ameliorate poverty but transform lives. If "faith institutions" were liberated, the argument goes, neighborhoods with so many churches would surely have ample social services, and thrive. But McRoberts' research suggests the contrary and, along the way, offers a glimpse of the role neighborhood-based politics plays in perpetuating the segregation and continued impoverishment of black people.

Religious districts like Four Corners, McRoberts demonstrates, are not parishes with too many pews; they are the religious equivalent of manufacturing zones, spe-

Local Anesthesia

By Kelly Kleiman

Chicago brags it's "a city of neighborhoods." So does Philadelphia. So do Baltimore, Boston, and San Francisco, among many others. But

drops in the following observation almost by the way:

Four Corners was a casualty of a fundamentally competitive and often adversarial urban political and economic process. ... The politics of land use, economic development, municipal services, education, and housing in Boston have often revolved around neighborhoods and their respective ability to either compete for limited resources or to defend territorial integrity. ... Meanwhile, Boston mayoral politics frequently appeal to the neighborhood basis of resource allocation. Raymond Flynn, mayor of Boston from 1983 to 1993, went as far as to refer to himself as "the neighborhood mayor."

If, as applied here, the very concept of "neighborhood" is a political strategy to

Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood

By Omar M. McRoberts
University of Chicago Press
186 pages, \$25

the next time you're tempted to regard this as a point of municipal pride, consider the argument at the heart of Omar M. McRoberts' new book *Streets of Glory*, a study of African-American churches in the impoverished Four Corners section of Boston. While assessing the role of these churches in urban life, McRoberts

cialized areas serving African Americans from throughout the metropolitan area. The churches within them represent and foster community, but not in the localized way that the word is used by people giving out Community Development Block Grants. Few of these commuter churches are willing, much less able, to provide social services where they're located, and those that do may be threatened by neighborhood improvement. Most don't own their own buildings. Rental churches can run soup kitchens and drop-in centers if they choose, but to become community leaders in redevelopment efforts would jeopardize their own ability to stay put. Churches do engage with "the street," but in limited ways and for their own institutional purposes.

If you happen to live in a manufacturing district, the good wages paid to commuting factory workers don't compensate for the smoke and noise of factories. And if you happen to live in a religious district like Four Corners, the churches' service to a wider community doesn't make up for their being in the way of redevelopment. And here the latent definition of neighborhood as "unified entity to compete for scarce resources" shows up again; because in a religious district, the very factors requiring an infusion of community development money—low property values and the churches drawn to them—are the ones that will prevent its arrival. As McRoberts summarizes:

The absence of secular neighborhood-oriented institutions placed the onus on churches to "make noise" on behalf of the neighborhood and develop the kind of interpersonal and interinstitutional networks that have supported mobilization in other locales. But these churches drew few of their members from the neighborhood.

And, he continues:

The idea of forging unity in the neighborhood was ... doubly daunting, for not only were institutions diversely constituted, but many did not even acknowledge the existence of the locale. The rare institutions that did claim the locale differed in their approaches to neighborhood problems and fell into conflict.

Arguing that so-called storefront churches are the consequence rather than

the cause of decline in urban neighborhoods, McRoberts describes how in the wake of economic deterioration, "The original religious ecology of four quaint neighborhood congregations gave way to a religious district in which dozens of churches coexisted by not competing for the same local membership pool." But he notes that cheap space is not the only reason black churches cluster together, tracing the pattern back to the days of segregation. Though confined to a single neighborhood, African-Americans maintained class distinctions. But each caste, and each denomination associated with it, had no choice but to set up shop in roughly the same place, creating a system of church membership having virtually nothing to do with geography. Even when African-Americans gained a measure of geographic mobility, relative independence between location and church affiliation remained; the commutes are just longer.

In addition, the churches are as liable to move as the people, a phenomenon McRoberts dubs "bouncing": "As they bounce from neighborhood to neighborhood, they gather new members, becoming increasingly metropolitan in scope, and abandon parishlike attachment to particular neighborhoods." If individual transience is considered an obstacle to social cohesion, McRoberts asks, how much more an obstacle is the here-today, gone-tomorrow condition of one of society's strongest institutions?

McRoberts also examines how the religious doctrine of exile, a life "in the world but not of the world," emerges from a broader black experience of exile: Southerners in the North, island people on the mainland, Africans in America. Thus many churches hold themselves apart from the neighborhoods others imagine they should serve. "Four Corners churches conceived of the street in three ways: as an evil other to be avoided at all cost, as a recruitment ground ... and as a point of contact with persons at risk who are to be served," McRoberts observes. Out of 21 congregations only one is committed to on-site social service without proselytizing, and two to services that include proselytizing. So much for the Charitable Choice notion that churches are yearning to take care of poor people without trying to convert them.

Yet McRoberts is polite about studies showing that two-thirds of black churches

are willing to provide social services, and about speculation that African-Americans have a higher tolerance than whites for breaching the barrier between church and state. "I doubt neither the figures nor the explanation. I do wonder, however, about the hefty minority ... that say they would refuse to accept government funds." He lets one of the Four Corners ministers speak for many of those in opposition: "We should try to get away from the secular world's money. Because they want to come control what you do. The feds are trying to control the churches."

The author's ideas deserve better expression than he gives them. Though his narrative skills are strong, McRoberts is liable to sentences like, "The term 'frame' refers to 'schemata of interpretation' that enable individuals to 'locate, perceive, identify, and label' occurrences within their life space and the world at large." Academic jargon of this density puts off the lay reader. Just one more edit would probably have sufficed to complete the transformation of *Streets of Glory* from a monograph to a book. Still, the professor's scholarly insight outweighs his occasionally laborious writing.

McRoberts has performed a great service by providing evidence to rebut those who imagine the profusion of churches in poor black neighborhoods represents some sort of pathological African-American preference for consolation over self-improvement. And he's demonstrated that, at least in the black community, there's less to Charitable Choice than its proponents claim.

But the idea that stands out is that the very notion of "neighborhood" interferes with redevelopment in neighborhoods needing it the most. Those who squirm at cities' delight in designating sections "Bronzeville" or "Chinatown" should look to McRoberts' analysis for the source of their queasiness: The celebrated "neighborhood" is more or less a device for keeping people in their place, their resources at a fixed level. Non-squirmlers should try to imagine a neighborhood called Jewtown. Jesse Jackson did, and was pilloried for it. Maybe he was being an anti-Semite. Maybe he was just being a good city-of-neighborhoods Chicagoan. ■

Kelly Kleiman writes frequently for the Chicago Reader.

Memory, Down with the Ship

By Brian Cook

Günter Grass' latest novel, *Crabwalk*, examines the 1945 sinking of the *Wilhelm Gustloff*. The worst maritime disaster in world history was the subject of a 1959 German film called *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*.

Crabwalk

By Günter Grass
Harcourt
234 pages, \$25

"Banned in the East," Grass explains, "the film achieved only a modest success in the West, and is now forgotten, like the unfortunate ship itself, submerged in the depths of archives."

The obscurity of the film perhaps can be readily explained, however, because "the plot was utterly predictable. Just as in all the *Titanic* films, a love story had to be brought in as filler ... as if the sinking of an overcrowded ship weren't exciting, the thousands of deaths not tragic enough."

Potential readers of *Crabwalk* need not worry that such a flaw scars this novel. Love makes few appearances, and when it does rear its ugly head, it is quickly handed its bags and booted out the door. As Paul Pokriefke, the novel's narrator, derisively scoffs, "Love? Forget about that till you're past seventy, and by then the parts will have stopped working anyway." Such revulsion makes sense in this context, because the *Wilhelm Gustloff*—and this goes a long way in explaining how the ship's tragic fate has escaped our historical radar—was a Nazi ship. And as we all know, there are no Nazi love stories.

Today, the only Nazi stories are hate stories, but these split into two categories. There are stories about the Nazis' hatred, and there are stories about hating the Nazis' hatred. Grass has written a novel of the latter category, or rather, he has created another

subdivision, writing about the effects of this hatred of hatred and how, ironically, and harrowingly, they might lead some back to the unthinkable, the impossible: a Nazi love story.

For obvious, blood-soaked reasons, history doesn't rate too highly with most literary aestheticians. To Joyce's Stephen Dedalus, it was the perpetual "nightmare" from which he was constantly "trying to awake." Less poetic but charged with the bitter humor Grass is justly renown for, Pokriefke observes that "history, or, to be more precise, the history we Germans have repeatedly mucked up, is a clogged toilet. We flush and flush, but the shit keeps rising."

Crabwalk interrogates this continuous interplay between forces past and present, and its title suggests just how fluid and intertwined the two are. Weaving a tale of many tales set in different times, Grass eschews a straightforward chronological

structure in favor of a "crabwalk," an approach of "seeming to go backward but actually scuttling sideways, and thereby working my way forward fairly rapidly."

No doubt Grass wishes the German audience he writes for will do the same. In the late '60s, Grass was critical of West Germany's rising New Left figures (Schröder and Fischer among them) for their blanket—and because after-the-fact, completely useless—condemnations of their parents' generation. Content with finger-pointing and scapegoating, they made no attempt to acknowledge the immense suffering endured by their civilian parents during the war, choosing instead simply to ignore it.

Writing from a present-day Germany where news reports indicate a rise in neo-Nazi activity, Grass is still fuming about this silence. Making sporadic appearances as Pokriefke's weary boss, Grass himself at one point tells him, "Never ... should his generation have kept silent about such misery, merely because its own sense of guilt was so overwhelming, merely because for years the need to accept responsibility and show remorse took precedence, with the result that they abandoned the topic to the right wing. This failure was staggering." *Crabwalk*, then, is Grass' belated attempt to redress this failure.

Glass' enlistment of Pokriefke as narrator is an indicator of the negative perfection *Crabwalk* achieves. A literal bastard, Pokriefke escaped the harsh confines of East Germany, only to make a mess of his life in the West. After dropping out of university, Pokriefke began writing at a right-wing tabloid, *Morgenpost*, before self-revulsion kicked in, turning him, weakly, leftward. A self-confessed "run-of-the-mill journalist" who always does his best to remain "neutral," Pokriefke's lack of ambition and conviction ruins his loveless marriage with Gabi, who in turn alienates him from his quietly troubled son Konrad. To



top it off, he so loathes his mother Tulla that he "never refers to [her] possessively as 'my mother' but only as 'Mother.'" No wonder the sardonic Grass hired him.

Longtime Grass fans may remember Tulla from her adolescent appearances in *Cat and Mouse* and *Dog Years*, the last two novels of Grass' Danzig Trilogy. Her hair has since turned ghostly white, but little else has changed. She still reeks of carpenter's glue and remains brutally honest, brutally stupid and just plain brutal. An unnerving truth of fiction is that its most vulgar characters often provide the most pleasure, and in this regard, Tulla sets a new standard. Indeed, when confronted with a character who so unreflectively embodies doublethink that she "once declared in front of all of her comrades that she was 'Stalin's last faithful follower,' and in the next breath held up Hitler's classless KDF [Strength Through Joy] society as the model for every true Communist," readers may find themselves experiencing a similarly contradictory combination of revulsion and intrigue.

For the novel's characters, however, disgust, and evasion from its root sources, reign supreme. Pokriefke's hatred of Tulla is more than reciprocated by the old woman herself, who feels that her son, in failing to write about the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, has abandoned his birthright. She means it literally. Because on the night of January 30, 1945, after two torpedoes from a Russian submarine had ripped into the ship's hull, and an estimated 9,000 people (mostly refugee women and children) had been killed by the blast and the icy Baltic waters, Tulla Pokriefke, one of a few thousand survivors, gave birth to her son Paul in a rescue boat, at the exact moment the ship itself sank fully beneath the sea.

The date is important. With it, Grass runs rings around history (or vice versa) not twice, but thrice. January 30 not only marks the day, 12 years earlier, that Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, but also marks, 50 years earlier, the birthday of the doomed ship's namesake, a hideous Nazi propagandist who, after being assassinated by a desperate Jew named David Frankfurter, was transformed into a martyr for Hitler's cause.

Grass excels at tracing the disparate histories of two beings (Frankfurter and Gustloff; Marinesko, the Russian submarine captain, and the ill-fated ship) headed toward a deadly confrontation. So there are disturbing intimations when, after finally sitting down to research the ship's demise, Pokriefke finds a neo-Nazi Web site devoted to the ship, where two young cyberpunks text-message each other while playing the roles of Gustloff and Frankfurter. Even more disturbing is Pokriefke's realization that the virtual Gustloff sounds suspiciously like his own son Konrad.

Will history repeat itself, or, in Pokriefke's words, will the shit keep rising? You can count on both, Grass forcefully argues, so long as one continues to view history in totalizing terms, something to be either wholly effaced, or, in reaction, wholly embraced. Consider *Crabwalk*, then, as a sort of plunger, diving fearlessly into a fetid pool brimming with turds of contradiction and ambiguity, and doing its best to work out the shit. ■

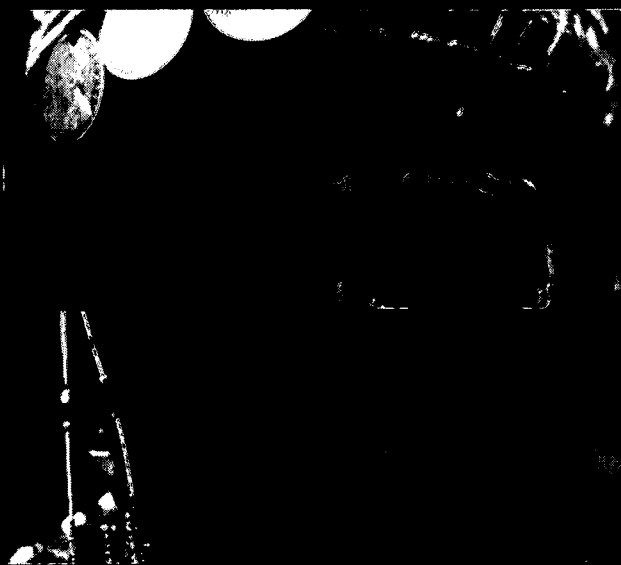


THE GREAT AMERICAN SOCIAL NOVEL

The biennial Bellwether Prize for Fiction, established and funded by novelist and *In These Times* contributor Barbara Kingsolver, is announcing a call for entries. The prize will be awarded to an unpublished novel that engages in any way with the theme of social responsibility. Previous winners are Donna Gershten's *Kissing the Virgin's Mouth* (2000) and Gayle Brandeis' *The Book of Dead Birds* (2002). The winning author for 2004 will receive \$25,000, and his or her novel will be guaranteed publication by a major publisher.

For guidelines and an application form, go online at www.bellwetherprize.org or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to National Writers United Service Organization, Bellwether Prize, 113 University Place, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10003-4527. The application fee is \$25, and the deadline for all submissions is October 1, 2003. The winner will be announced in May 2004.

Cultural Survival



www.cs.org

EDUCATION

Learn Spanish rapidly, help rural Maya women. Individual Spanish immersion methodology, lodging/meals with Guatemalan family, unique culture/service opportunities, \$140-\$160 weekly—at least 30 percent of tuition supports education for 55 youth/women of remote Guatemalan pueblos. See www.centromaya.org. Write maestros@centromaya.org.

PERSONALS

Concerned Singles
links compatible singles who care about peace, social justice, gender equity, racism, and the environment. Nationwide. All ages. Straight/Gay. Since 1984.
FREE SAMPLE: Box 444-IT, Lenox Dale, MA 01242; (413) 445-6309; OR <http://www.concernedsingles.com>

ORGANIZATIONS

RESOURCES FOR NONPROFITS: Non-profit Financial Center has popular

online guides, publications, training, and accounting and advisory services to help your nonprofit organization better understand and manage its finances. Visit NFCOnline.org for expert nonprofit-to-nonprofit support. NFC has been helping nonprofits achieve financial success since 1980. Learn more at NFCOnline.org.

QUALITY OF LIFE DATA AND INSIGHT available through **MCIC** (Metro Chicago Information Center), a nonprofit social research and consulting organization. We'll find or collect the data you need. Call about our \$100 full year membership. **312-580-2876** or visit us on the web at www.mcic.org.

GET A GRIP ON NONPROFIT FINANCES. CPAs for the Public Interest (CPAsPI) places volunteer financial professionals with Illinois charitable nonprofits to assist with financial management challenges and serve on your nonprofit board. We also provide free publications and resources on a broad range of financial management topics for

nonprofits. Call 312.993-0407 x216 or visit www.cpaspi.org for more info.

DONORS FORUM OF CHICAGO serves grantmakers and nonprofits in the city and suburbs with workshops, publications, research, and more. A full calendar of programs is available at www.donorsforum.org

DOES YOUR GRASSROOTS GROUP need a location for your event? The Autonomous Zone Chicago offers a raw 1600 sq. ft space. The A-Zone is a 9-year-old community infoshop and resource center. Email esperanza@azone.org for more information.

THE CANCER WELLNESS CENTER seeks to empower those affected by cancer through a comprehensive array of free services, available to survivors and their loved ones. A Healing Touch class will be taught as a self-care technique September 9, 25, October 7 and 22. 215 Revere Drive, Northbrook, IL 60062. Visit www.cancerwellness.org or call (847) 509-9595.

DONORS FORUM OF CHICAGO serves grantmakers and nonprofits in the city and suburbs with workshops, publications, research and more. Check out Giving in Illinois 2003, a comprehensive new report on Illinois philanthropic trends, and Illinois Funding Source, the premier online funding research tool, at www.donorsforum.org.

WANT THE CONVENIENCE OF A CAR without the costs and hassles? Join I-GO! Chicago's new car sharing service. Hourly car rental. Pay as you drive and let I-GO pay for insurance, maintenance, parking and even gas. It's easy, affordable and flexible transportation. To become an I-GO member, visit

www.i-go-cars.org or call 773-278-4800 x227

EMPLOYMENT

NEW CAREERS, JOBS & PAID internships in progressive social change are listed in **CHANGEWORKS** newsletter. Subscription info: www.change-works.org, editor@changeworks.org, or 1-866-276-7201 (toll-free).

BOOK EDITOR: SOUTH END PRESS seeks editor/activist, minimum of 3 years' experience, excellent computer and organizational skills, and demonstrated commitment to social justice. Salary: \$36,000 for 32 hours/week, plus 20 percent dependent allowance, and full health/dental, flex-time, 4 weeks' vacation/year. People of color strongly encouraged to apply. Send resume and cover letter to Personnel, 7 Brookline St., Cambridge, MA 02139. Deadline: September 1.

FULL-TIME POSITIONS AVAILABLE in progressive Boston-based national organization that wins corporate campaigns: Administrative Manager, Senior Fundraiser, Press Officer, Senior Organizer, and Deputy Director. To apply, send cover letter, resume & 3-5 references to Karla Capers, Infact, 46 Plympton St., Boston, MA 02118—Fax: 617-695-2626—karla@infact.org—www.infact.org.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WANTED. Chicago grassroots community organization fighting for local improvements, social justice. Must have community organizing, fundraising experience. See www.blockstogether.org. Contact Blocks Together, 3914 W. North Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, 773-276-2184.

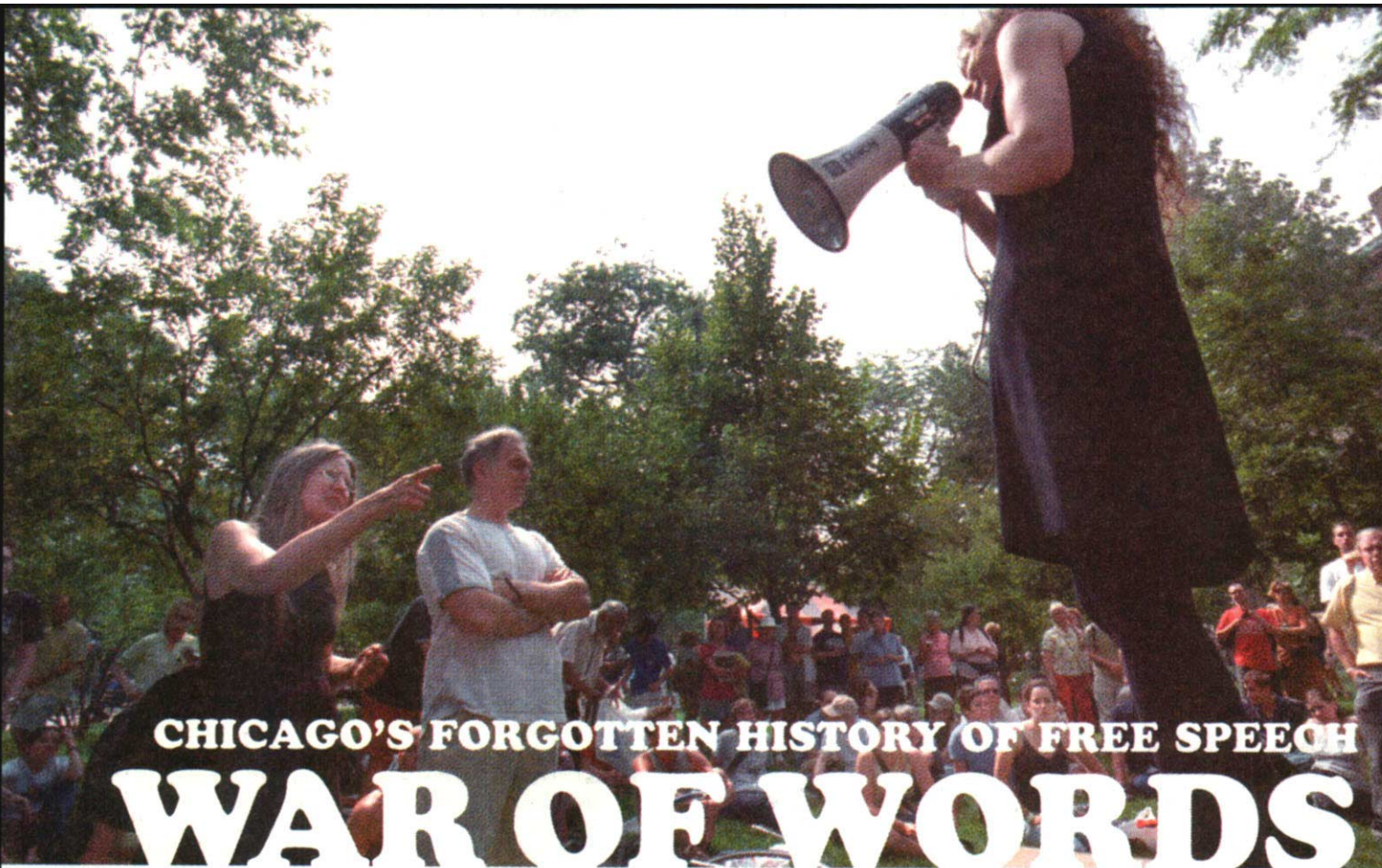
ORDER TOLL-FREE: 877-21-BITCH
SAMPLE ISSUE \$5, FOUR-ISSUE SUBSCRIPTION \$15
www.bitchmagazine.com

elp. Keep your eyes

Consider a bequest to In These Times.

When planning your estate, please consider a tax-exempt bequest, trust distribution or other long-term support for *In These Times* through the Institute for Public Affairs.

CALL JOEL BLEIFUSS, AT (773) 772-0100, EXT. 232
IN THESE TIMES • 2040 N. MILWAUKEE AVE. • CHICAGO, IL • 60647



CHICAGO'S FORGOTTEN HISTORY OF FREE SPEECH WAR OF WORDS

RYAN HODGSON-RIGSBEE

BY JEREMY OHMES

Today, the maps may read Washington Square Park, but for the better part of a century, this well-manicured plot of grass on Chicago's Near North Side was once known as Bughouse Square, the city's preeminent forum for free speech.

At Bughouse Square, all forms of human miscellany—from anarchists to academics, poets to prostitutes, crooks to clergymen—gathered round, mounted soapboxes, and pontificated on a myriad of political and philosophical issues. One Chicago newspaper described the square as “a three-ring circus, [or] a carnival. ... You have a feeling, as you leave the square that you'd go bughouse if you stayed there any longer.”

On July 25 and 26, the Newberry Library held its annual Bughouse Square Debates in homage to the bedlam of yore. With megaphones in hand, a dozen orators expounded on Illinois gambling laws, the prison system, civil disobedience, weapons of mass destruction, the war in Iraq, genetically modified foods, union labor, the Patriot Act, and even the concept of depaving Lake Shore Drive.

Audiences did their part with cat calls and heckling, while the soapboxers responded with wit, passion, or sometimes just a blank stare. But Kathy Kelly, a three-year Bughouse participant and founder of the Chicago-based Voices in the Wilderness, subdued the jeering crowd with her sobering recollections of life in Baghdad during the war in Iraq.

In its infancy in the mid-1800's, Bughouse Square was a place where people would gather to get water, share stories, and wax poetic on the news and politics of the day. Then around 1900, as more immigrants moved to Chicago and the city expanded, the old-money mansions surrounding the square

became rooming houses with a variety of vagabonds milling about.

“Around this time there was a very organized hobo movement in Chicago,” muses Cindy Mitchell, Bughouse historian and current “mayor” of Bughouse Square. “They would gather in the square and elect a king to decide who should speak, what they should speak about, and where the stage should be.” Bughouse Square gradually became the hub of a “new bohemian element” in town. By 1915, it was a bastion of unbridled free speech. Everyday new ideas were being experimented with, argued over, and discussed as old ones were being challenged, reconfigured, or blatantly disregarded.

“Nothing was too taboo or sacred, and no one was safe from the voices of dissent,” Mitchell says. Besides the usual mix of bohemian radicals, soapboxers also included fundamentalist Christians, doctors, prohibitionists, and the occasional raving lunatic.

“Two of the most famous Bughouse orators was a man called ‘One-Armed Charlie’ who would quote the Constitution by heart, and ‘Crazy Mary’ who was a religious fanatic,” recalls Mitchell. Ambassadors of free speech like Clarence Darrow, Ben Hecht, Carl Sandburg, Eugene Debs, and Emma Goldman all made Bughouse Square a regular stop. Around the corner, the Dill Pickle club took the debate indoors during the winter and was marked by a sign reading: “Step high, stoop low, leave your dignity outside.”

But Bughouse, like much of radical America, started to go into decline during World War I, when the police began cracking down on suspected radicals, anarchists, and socialists through harassment and bogus arrests. And with the rise of radio and television, it wasn't long before the City of Big Shoulders shrugged off its oldest platform for free speech. With the exception of the yearly debates, these days the square is a shadow of its former self, with neither soapbox nor silver-tongued speaker in sight. ■